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THE MAINSPRINGS OF RUSSIA

BY

MAURICE BARING

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN, LEEDS
PARIS, LEIPZIG, AND NEW YORK

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By MAURICE BARING.

WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA . . . . 1s. net.

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THOMAS NELSON AND SONS.

THE MAINSPRINGS OF RUSSIA. *First Published, June 1914.*

DEDICATION.

To H. G. Wells.

My Dear H. G.,

I dedicate this book to you in the hope that you will read it; for if you do, I shall feel certain of having at least one reader who will understand exactly what I have tried to say, however inadequate the expression may have been, and who, at any rate, will not misunderstand me.

Not long ago I was looking on at a play in London. The audience was, on the whole, of that kind which the Americans call "high-browed," with a certain sprinkling of the semi-intelligent and the wholly elegant. Behind me were sitting a young man and a young lady, who were discussing intellectual topics suited to the rarer atmosphere of that interesting theatre.

Among other subjects, they talked about Mr. Stephen Grahame's books and articles on Russia. I do not know if you have read his books; if not, I advise you to do so. But you probably know that they deal with the Russian people; that Mr. Grahame walked on foot from Moscow to Archangel; and travelled, as a pilgrim, with Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem. It is therefore obvious that he came into close contact with the Russian people, and that his knowledge was at first hand and derived from direct experience.

Well, would you believe it, the highly educated young gentleman who was sitting behind me, who had read Mr. Grahame's books and articles, said—I could hardly believe my ears, but he said it—that the trouble about Mr. Grahame was his blind faith in *the Russian Bureaucracy*. I confess, when these words caught my ear, I thought to myself what is the use of writing books if intelligent people in reading them derive an impression which is the exact opposite of that which you think you have expressed with some clearness?

The young man in question went on to say that such was Mr. Grahame's fierce faith in

political reaction that he dared to compare a half-starved Russian peasant with a free American citizen, and here again he revealed fresh vistas of misapprehension.

I have often had similar experiences myself since I began to write about Russian things. I have at various times been accused of being a revolutionary, a conservative, a liberal, a fanatical reactionary. But these accusations have left me indifferent, since, as they contradict themselves, they cancel out into nothingness.

As far as the subject of Russia is concerned, I have always, and only, had one object in view: to stimulate in others an interest which I have myself experienced. I know—I cannot explain why it is—but I know that between the Russian and the English peoples there are curious possibilities of sympathy, curious analogies, and still more curious differences which complement one another. I know the Russians and the English do get on well when they meet and get to know each other. I know the sympathy I myself have felt, and do feel, for the Russians is a sympathy which would, can, and could be felt

by many of my countrymen. This has been my whole and sole object in writing about Russia. I am engaged on one more very short book on Russian literature, and then I shall drop the subject for ever. I have said my say. I leave it to the newer and better writers to say theirs.

But in the meantime, in regard to this book, I repeat I wish to secure at least one reader who will understand and who will not misunderstand. That is why I dedicate this book to you. At the same time I hope, even if you do not read it, that it will remind you of the strenuous days and the Attic nights which we spent together in St. Petersburg.

Yours ever,

MAURICE BARING.

St. Petersburg,
February 22–*March* 7, 1914.

PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured in this book to provide some kind of answer to the questions which I found by experience are generally put by the traveller who comes to Russia for the first time, and whose curiosity is stimulated with regard to the way in which the people live and to the manner of their government.

I have endeavoured to convey to the reader a single idea of the nature of the more important factors in Russian life. I am only too well aware that what I have to supply in the way of explanation and elucidation is inadequate, incomplete, and superficial. My excuse is that the questions of the average inquirer are, as a rule, neither profound nor comprehensive; and that profound or comprehensive replies, were I capable of giving them—which I am not—would be received neither with attention nor interest.

They would be like arrows shot into empty space. For the average inquirer has neither time nor inclination for exhaustive inquiry or minute research. He wishes to be told what he wishes to know in a manner he can understand, and as briefly as possible. But my hope is that I may stimulate the interest of the reader in the subject, and in a manner which may lead him to seek for more exhaustive information at the fountain-head, or at richer sources than mine. This is every day becoming easier.

Some years ago books on Russia which had any serious value or substantial interest were few and far between. Lately the interest in Russian affairs has been stimulated by many causes: by the coming of Russian artists, singers, and dancers to England; by the appearance in the press of valuable articles written by Russian authors; by the publication of adequate translations from Russian authors (Mrs. Garnett's translations of Dostoievsky, for instance); and by several excellent books written by English authors on Russia, such as the books of Mr. Stephen Grahame dealing with the Russian people, the admirable and encyclopædic work of Mr. Harold Williams, and, in a

somewhat lighter vein, Mr. Reynold's "My Russian Year." All these books reveal a standpoint, a mastery of the subject, that are far removed from the fantastic, false, and melodramatic concoctions that were abundant some years ago.

In calling this book the "Mainsprings" of Russia, I am conscious of having omitted several of the most important mainsprings of Russian life: chief among them its commerce and industry. The subject is so large that, had I dealt with it at all, there would have been no room for anything else in a book of this size. Also, as far as the actual facts are concerned they are to be found clearly stated in Dr. Kennard's excellent "Russian Year Book."

Nor have I attempted to deal with the Army and the Navy, which I consider to be factors which are likely to be dealt with by experts, since they cannot afford to be altogether neglected by foreigners. There is another subject I have omitted—it is not, it is true, a mainspring of Russian life; but it is a sore spot and a question of burning vital interest—I mean the Jewish question.

In a book as short as this it would be impos-

sible to devote sufficient space to the matter without crowding out other things which concern the greater majority; but it is most desirable that competent observers should deal with the Jewish question in Russia, which at present, as far as the rest of Europe is concerned, is almost entirely handled either by bitter Anti-Semites, or by those who are the actors in the drama itself. And there is no question in Modern Russia which is fraught with more far-reaching effects, and probably none which is at present more difficult of solution.

My thanks are due to A. J. Halpern of the Russian Bar for his valuable help in regard to the chapter on "Justice," to Mr. Dimitriev-Mamonov, and to many other Russian friends for their criticism and advice.

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THE MAINSPRINGS OF RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECT.

I SHOULD like to set the reader's mind at rest at once. I am not going to ask him to read a historical treatise on the origins of the Russian people, nor am I going to lead him into the obscure pathways and dim shadows of the remote past.

Firstly, even if I wished to do so, I have not the necessary erudition, nor the requisite powers of learned exposition. Secondly, the origin of the Russian people is a debatable question; the theories with regard to it are constantly changing, and vary with the fickle fashion of the day; the orthodox views of forty, of thirty, of twenty years ago are now said to be old-fashioned; and

the orthodox views of to-day will probably be considered old-fashioned before very long. The reason being that all such views are highly conjectural, and that very little is known about the shifting tides, eddies, and currents in the immeasurably far-off floods of races and tribes out of which the Russian people emerged.

Thirdly, whenever I open a book that begins with a historical retrospect, I feel that it is the reader's duty to skip that chapter.

Why, then, write anything of the kind? The answer is that I am writing on the assumption that the reader is an average reader, and that if he has bought or borrowed a book about Russia, he will be sufficiently interested in the subject to be able to stand a few simple facts to begin with, even if they are historical. I also assume that, if he has bought or borrowed this book, and has not gone to a public library to get a more learned book, he is not a specialist—that is to say, he knows as much or as little as the average Englishman knows about Russia who has received an average English education, who reads *The Times*, and takes a moderate but intelligent interest in international politics and

foreign countries, and who has perhaps read one or two standard books on Russia, and not only *My Official Wife* by Savage, *Michael Strogoff* by Jules Verne, and all that picturesque tribe of books called either Red Russia, Scarlet Russia, Crimson Russia, Free Russia, the Real Russia, Russia as she is, or Russia as she isn't.

There is also another class of reader who may take up the book, also an average reader, with an average education, but whose knowledge of Russia is of a different and wider kind—the reader of translations of Russian novels, the devotee of Tolstoy and Turgeniev and Gorky; the man or woman—it is generally a woman—who has seen translations of Chekhov's plays at the Stage Society, and who is a fervent admirer of the Russian ballet. He or she is interested in Russia, but has never been there; and although familiar with Russian novels and plays, he or she is more inclined to form an opinion of the Russian people on data derived from English novels on Russian life than from Russian novels on Russian life.

I have often come across cases of this kind—I mean people who do not appear to realize that the intensely realistic Russian fiction that

they so much admire probably has some basis and counterpart in real life, and who, in spite of this documentary evidence with regard to Russian life, with which they are familiar, still continue to form a picture of Russian life based on English fiction such as is written by English journalists and novelists.

Such readers, my experience is, if they come across certain historical facts about Russia in the past or the present, meet them with a shock of surprise and often with a smile of incredulity.

It is for the benefit of the average reader of every kind that I want to try and make a few, a very few, historical facts clear, which I think throw light on any attempt to deal with any aspects of Russian life. If the reader knows them too well already, he will forgive me and skip, proud of his superior knowledge; if he disbelieves them, he can dispute them, and prove me wrong.

My first fact is geographical. It is that Russia is a flat country, without an indented seacoast, and without sharp mountain ranges. It is not only flat but uniform. Owing to this, the expansion of the Russian people took place

on land. The Russians were, and are, constantly emigrating, at first from south to north, and afterwards from west to east. Russia is therefore a country of colonists.

I remember once saying this to a man to whom the statement evidently came as a shock of surprise, because he replied, "Really, I thought Russia was an autocracy."

Now, who are these colonists? Who are the Russians, in fact? I wonder if one set this question to all the schoolboys and undergraduates, what the most prevalent answer would be. I believe it would be something like this: that the Russian was a man got up like a European except in winter, but that if you scratched him you would find a Tartar, and that a Tartar was a man with a yellow skin and a snub nose. I think you might also often get the answer that Russians were Slavs; but that if you asked what a Slav is, you would be told he was a kind of Tartar.

In Russia at the present day you will find representatives of every kind of race and every kind of creed—Buriats who worship Buddha, and disciples of the late Lord Radstock—and

every kind of language; but out of all these, three dominant races played a part in Russian history—the Finns, the Tartars, and the Slavs. The Slavs got the best of it. They absorbed the Finns and ousted the Tartars.

So we remain face to face with the question, What are the Slavs? As to how, why, whence, and when the Slavs came to Russia hundreds of books have been written, and the solution of the problem is, I believe, like that of many historical questions, a matter of fashion.

One solid fact, however, rises before our grateful comprehension. The Slavs are a white people like the Latins, the Celts, and the Germans; they have nothing in common with anything Tartar, Mongol, or Semitic; and there are traces of them having been in Southern Europe on the banks of the Vistula and of the Dnieper from time immemorial.

Having got to Russia a long time ago, they overran the country and absorbed it.

They began in the south, the capital being Kiev, and in the eleventh century Russia was a part of the political system of Europe.

Russia, in the days before William the Con-

queror—in the days of Harold, who was related to one of the rulers of Kiev, Yaroslav—was not more backward than France or England were at that time, and would probably have developed in the same manner as the other European countries had it not been for an unfortunate interruption in the shape of a Mongol or Tartar invasion.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century Russia was under the dominion of the Mongols.

The Slavs, as they gradually expanded and absorbed Russia, fell into two natural divisions: the Great Russians and the Little Russians, which correspond to the north and the south. When the Mongol invasion came about, the Little Russians were cut off from the Great Russians.

The Great Russians continued to expand northward, southward, and eastward. They were engaged in a perpetual struggle against the East. They acted as a buffer for Europe against the East; and in the sixteenth century they finally got rid of the Eastern yoke altogether and drove them out of the country.

This is the big fact I have been leading up

to: Russia saved Western Europe from being overrun by hordes of barbarians.

"There is," writes the late Mr. Stead, in the introduction to the translation of Labaume's narrative of Napoleon's campaign, "a strange and pestilent habit among some Englishmen of ignoring all the great services which Russia has rendered to the cause of human progress and the liberty of nations."

That Russia acted as a buffer against the barbarian invasion from the East is the first and not the least of these services.

In the sixteenth century the Great Russia was a kingdom centralized in Moscow, chiefly engaged in fighting her neighbours, the most powerful of which was Poland, and one of the most energetic and singular of her rulers, Ivan the Terrible, began to negotiate with the West. Ivan, in fact, wished to marry Queen Elizabeth; but Western Europe was not vitally affected by Russia until the appearance on the stage of the world of that extraordinary monarch, and still more extraordinary man, called Peter the Great.

Peter the Great not only conceived and executed the idea of opening in Russia a window

on to the West, but he restored to Russia her place among European nations—the place she had occupied in the eleventh century, and which she had lost owing to the Mongol invasion.

It was no abnormal or unnatural mission that Peter the Great set out to accomplish, otherwise his work would have died with him. He carried Russia along the natural road of her career. Only, being a man of abnormal genius, he gave to Russia a violent electric shock; he accelerated to an extent, which seems little short of miraculous, the natural progress of the country. He accomplished in a few years the work of many generations. "Pierre Ier," says Montesquieu, "donnait les mœurs et les manières de l'Europe à une nation de l'Europe." He shifted the capital of the country, built St. Petersburg on a swamp, created an army, a fleet, enrolled quantities of foreigners into the service of Russia. He sketched the outlines of a gigantic plan, which still remains to be filled in to this day. The violence and fury with which he compelled a reluctant people to adopt his changes had, of course, its drawbacks. A nation has to pay for a man of genius, even when he is working

on the right lines, for what is for the good of his country, and for what is, in the long run, in accordance with its national spirit.

Peter the Great was successful, but the methods which he had to employ in order to bring about his swift and gigantic changes were not without regrettable results, which are still visible in the machinery of Russian administration and in the nature of many Russian institutions. He found Russia a sleepy kingdom encrusted with Oriental habit and Byzantine tradition; he hacked off that crust with an axe, and he left Russia open to the influences of Europe, and ready to value the place which was her due amongst the nations of Europe.

His work was carried on by Catherine II. on the same lines, and further. She opened educated Russia to European ideas; she civilized Russia intellectually; and Russia, under her guidance, took a leading part in the European Concert.

But it was later that Russia was destined to play a part which vitally affected every nation of Western Europe. This was in 1812. In 1812 Russia broke up the power of Napoleon.

"Leipzig and Waterloo were but the corollaries," writes Mr. Stead, "of a solved problem."

"It is an incontestable fact," writes M. Rambaud, the French historian of Russia, "that of all the allies, Russia showed herself the least grasping. It was she who had given the signal for the struggle against Napoleon, and had shown most perseverance in pursuit of the common end. Without her example the states of Europe would never have dreamed of arming against him. Her skilful leniency towards France finished the work begun by the war."

So far, all these facts I have mentioned concern the relations of Russia to Europe; they necessarily reacted on the internal conditions of the country.

The fact that Russia was playing an important part abroad meant that the means by which this part could be played had to be furnished at home, and the finding of such means affected the administration of the country and the whole of its population.

In order that Russia should be able to play a part in Europe, the first thing that was necessary was an army.

Peter the Great made an army (and a fleet). How did he do it? Where did the officers and men come from?

When Peter the Great came to the throne, the organization of the State was patriarchal. There was practically no standing army except a kind of corps of janissaries, the *streltsy* (which he destroyed). There were two classes: the nobility and the peasants. The nobility held the land and the peasants tilled it; but the nobility held the land on one condition only, and that was that they should render military service in their own person when it was necessary.

The nobles were at the same time landowners and servants of the State, but they were landowners only on condition of being State servants.

The peasants belonged to the land; they were attached to the land and could not be separated from it. This is what serfdom meant in Russia. Serfdom was not an immemorial institution in Russia. It was not a relic of paganism or barbarism; it was founded neither on conquest, nor on the habit of turning the captives made

in inter-tribal wars into slaves, nor on a difference of race or colour; and unless this be understood, unless the true nature of this serfdom be realized, it is impossible to understand the part which the Russian peasantry play in the Russian nation.

Briefly, serfdom came about thus. The peasants cultivated the land which the monarch conceded to the nobles as a salary or means of subsistence in return for military service. But up till about the end of the sixteenth century the peasants could choose and change their masters, and pass from one estate to another. They used, in fact, to exercise their right of transfer once a year, on St. George's Day.

At the end of the sixteenth century labour was precious and rare, and eagerly sought after by the nobles. The peasants were naturally inclined to emigrate, and the more adventurous were attracted towards the regions of the Don, the Kama, the Volga, and Siberia, and they thus avoided paying taxes. Moreover, the larger landed proprietors attracted the peasants to their estates to the detriment of the smaller landed proprietors. The primitive fiscal system of that

day suffered from all this, and as a remedy to this state of things, in order to guarantee and regularize the financial and military supplies of the State, the peasant was attached to the soil. In 1593, in the reign of Feodor, the son of Ivan the Terrible, and owing to the initiative of Boris Godonnov, the right of transfer from one estate to another was first temporarily taken away from the peasant. The prohibition to transfer their service on this date was renewed by several sovereigns, and was finally crystallized in the law of the country. Once attached to the soil the peasant gradually lost his civil rights and became the chattel of the proprietor; thus what began by being a simple police measure ended by becoming organized slavery. Such was the state of things when Peter the Great came to the throne. The peasant was attached to the soil, the nobility were the army, for when an army was needed they had to fight themselves and to supply so many men into the bargain.

Peter the Great wanted a standing army; and in order to get one, and at the same time to carry on the administration of the country, he created, or rather enlarged, the system of

universal service. Every single Russian became a public servant. Henceforward it became obligatory for the noble to serve the State either in the military or the civil service—always, and not only in times of war. Moreover, in order to be an officer he had to pass an examination, and if he failed to pass it he had to serve as a private soldier. Further, in order to get enough soldiers, a system of conscription was introduced; that is to say, in every place, out of so many thousand men, so many were taken.

Again, the nobility ceased to be a closed caste depending on hereditary titles; it became a class of State servants, and was thrown open to all. Rank depended on service. Instead of obtaining a post because you were a noble, you became a noble for having attained by service to such and such a post. Rank in service became the only rank. Thus Peter the Great, in order to create a standing army, created a standing civil service; he destroyed the principle of hereditary aristocracy; and both branches of the universal service he created, military and civil, were divided into its fourteen grades or *tchins*, hence the word *tchinnovnik*, the ordi-

nary Russian word for official. Again, as he was constantly going to war, and constantly needed men, and the nobility had to supply so many men from their land, he tightened the bonds which attached the peasants to the soil. He strengthened the system of serfdom; and the rulers who succeeded him carried on the same policy, because the revenue depended on the State being administered by the landed gentry, which gradually ceased to be an aristocratic caste, and kept on increasing in size, until towards the end of the reign of Catherine II., when it had grown to be a vast bureaucracy.

It is clear that, if the great majority of the landed proprietors were engaged in administrating the country, they would have less and less time to look after their estates after the old patriarchal fashion; and it is also clear that as civilization progressed everything in the machinery of the State necessarily increased in size. Men were needed to deal with the more complicated machinery; with the administration of finances, of justice, and of the police. The men who filled all the new posts created by the ever-increasing complication of the adminis-

tration of the State were the former landed proprietors, the actual officials. The consequence was they ceased to be able to look after their land. This being so, there was no defence left against the growing moral sentiment which had risen against serfdom, namely: the moral principle that it was wrong that peasants should be in the position of cattle and chattels. This sentiment was expressed more than once by the peasants themselves in mutinies. It was expressed from the outside by all that was enlightened in the country.

The Emperor Alexander I. took the first steps towards the great reform by liberating the serfs in the Baltic provinces. It is said that his brother, the Emperor Nicholas, on his deathbed left the execution of the reform as a solemn legacy to his son and successor, Alexander II. The Crimean War was the actual shock which brought the reform about. Literature was a powerful factor in pressing it on. Writers of genius, such as Gogol and Turgeniev, by their descriptions; publicists, such as Samarin and Herzen, by their pleading, played a large part in accelerating its advent. They gave expression

to what was the universal and imperative opinion of thinking Russia, so that the reform when it came about, and when the serfs were liberated in 1861, was the work of the nation as well as of the Emperor.

This retrospect has brought us to the year 1861. Since then many momentous things have happened to Russia. A war; the inauguration of a system of local self-government; another war; and if not a revolution, a revolutionary movement, a long and vital crisis, out of which rose the beginnings of popular representation. But these events, in so far as they deal with Russian life as it is to-day, will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER II.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT.

THE Russian peasant is the most important factor in Russian life. He constitutes the majority of the nation. The peasant not only tills the arable land, but he owns the greater part of it. This is a fact which is practically unknown in England. There was once an anarchist Russian who gave a lecture to the poor in the East End of London on the wrongs of the Russian people. In the course of the lecture he declared with fervent indignation that no peasant in Russia could own more than so many acres of land. Upon which the audience cried "Shame!" The irony of this is piercing when one reflects that not one member of that audience had ever owned, or could ever in his wildest dreams look forward to owning, a particle of arable soil.

The average reader, who has some vague notions of Russia, probably thinks of the Russian peasant as a serf, and as such a scarcely civilized savage—a little better than a beast. It has already been mentioned in the preceding chapter that serfdom in Russia was not a slavery resulting from conquest or difference in race and colour, but the outcome of economic conditions. Serfdom was a measure by which the peasant, who had a tendency to wander, was made fast to the land, because if he wandered the State was threatened with economic ruin; moral slavery, and the ownership of the peasant by the landowner, were the ultimate results of this economic measure. When the legislation which ultimately produced serfdom was framed, it was not regarded by those who framed it as a permanent solution of the relations between landowner and peasant, but only as a temporary makeshift. The result—namely, slavery—was unforeseen.

Now, the peasants never, through nearly two centuries of slavery, lost sight of the fact that this legislation was only a temporary makeshift, a stroke of opportunism. Moreover, they kept fast hold of the idea that the land was theirs;

that the land belonged to the people who tilled it; and that if for a time it was in the hands of landowners, that was because the emperor was obliged to lend it to the landowners, in order to pay them for such military service which the destinies of the fatherland rendered indispensable.

In 1861 came the emancipation of the serfs, and this emancipation did not merely mean the end of the personal and moral slavery of the peasant, but something far more important also—namely, that a portion of the land which the peasant considered to be his by right was restored to him. The emancipation of the serfs was an act of State expropriation. More than 130,000,000 *desiatines* of land (350,964,187 acres) passed from the hands of the landowners into the hands of the peasants for ever. On an average each peasant received from $8\frac{1}{4}$ to 11 acres; in the north he might receive more, in the south less. The nobility—that is to say, the landowners—were paid down by the Government for the land they had given up; the peasants had to pay back the State in instalments, over a period of more than fifty years. The State acted as

banker to both parties, and not only paid the landowners ready money, but advanced the money to the peasants. The peasant had to pay back the money advanced to him at an interest of six per cent. over a period of forty-nine years, until the year 1910.

In 1907 these payments were cancelled.

The peasants, after the emancipation, were to continue to own the land in common, as they had always done before.

In the days of serfdom every landowner possessed so much land, and the serfs—or, as they were called, "the souls"—who belonged to it. After the emancipation, each batch of serfs belonging to each separate owner became a separate and independent community, which owned land in common. The land which was thus owned in common could not be redistributed more than once every twelve years, and even then only if two-thirds of the village assembly voted for redistribution. A similar majority was necessary before any of the common land could become private property.

All the land which was fit for cultivation was divided amongst the peasants, according to the

number of taxed members in each household. But as the nature of the soil varied with its situation, and was richer in one place than another, or was more or less advantageous owing to other reasons—say its proximity or distance from the village—instead of receiving all his share of the land in one place, each taxed member in every household received so many strips of land in different places, so that the division might be fair.

Supposing the land to be divided amongst Tom, Dick, and Harry was good in some parts, bad in another, and indifferent in a third, and each was to receive an acre: Tom would receive a third in the good part, a third in the bad part, and a third in the indifferent part, and Dick and Harry would fare likewise. When the land was redistributed, the share received by each household varied as that household increased or diminished in numbers.

From 1861, the year of the emancipation, until 1904, the year of the Russo-Japanese War, the only change of importance in the peasant system of land tenure was made in the reign of Alexander III. A clause was introduced into

the legislation on peasant land tenure which made it impossible for the peasant to buy himself out of the Commune. This clause was added in 1890. It was done because the Government at this period looked on the peasants as a safe conservative element, and considered that communal ownership of land fostered conservatism. During all this period agriculture had not improved, but had deteriorated. Half the landowners in Russia disappeared, and their place was taken by the peasants or by the merchants. The remaining landowners either let their land to the peasants, or tried (and for the most part failed) to farm it rationally.

In 1904 came political unrest and universal political discontent. And amongst the peasants this discontent was expressed by one formula, and one formula alone—"Give us more land." Agrarian riots took place all over Russia, and landowners' houses were burnt and their cattle destroyed.

Universal expropriation was brought forward as a political measure, but economically it was felt by those who had faced the question practically to be no remedy, except in regard to the

land which was let by the landowners to the peasants.

Nevertheless, something had to be done. All over Russia every landowner sold a certain amount of land to the peasants, and a great part of the land which had been hitherto let to the peasants, and not farmed by the landowner himself, became the peasants' property. In 1905, roughly speaking, twenty-five per cent. of the amount of land still belonging to landowners passed into the hands of the peasants.

In 1910 another great change came about. Owing to a law, drawn up at the initiative of P. A. Stolypin, the peasant obtained the right of leaving the Commune, and of converting his share of the land into his individual and permanent property. He could, moreover, exchange his separated strips of land for a corresponding amount of land which should be as far as possible all in one place. And if he wished to do this, and to start a farm, he could receive financial assistance from the State.

On paper, nothing could be more satisfactory, the situation seeming to be this—that the peasant is able to leave the Commune if he wishes and

become an independent peasant proprietor, but he is not compelled to do so. The idea was expressed at the time of the emancipation of the serfs by the men who drafted the law of reform, that it was desirable to leave the question of communal tenure to settle itself. And the same idea was reasserted by the Russian ministry, when the Bill on peasant land tenure was introduced into the Duma—namely, that it would be wrong either to bolster up the Commune artificially, or to destroy it, and that the right course was to leave the population itself free to settle in every individual case whether it wishes to remain in the Commune or not.

Practically this is not what has happened. Practically, both owing to certain clauses in the law itself, and owing to the manner of its application, pressure has been put on the peasants to leave the Commune. The law works advantageously for those who leave the Commune, disadvantageously for those who wish to remain in the Commune. To explain how this happens would entail going into many technical points. To those who are interested in this subject, I would recommend an article in *The Russian*

Review of November 1912, by Alexander Manuilov, a member of the Russian Council of Empire.

But if it is too lengthy a task to explain how this is so, it is easy in a few sentences to explain why this is so.

The law on land tenure was made by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy has always treated the peasant question from a political point of view. When the communal system seemed to lead to conservatism, the bureaucracy backed up the communal system (this was so, as I have already said, in the reign of Alexander III., and indeed made it impossible for the peasant to leave the Commune); when after 1904 the communal system seemed to encourage socialistic ideas, or to be made a basis for socialistic ideas, the bureaucracy backed up individual land tenure. Moreover, in the law itself and in the manner of its application the minority (those who wish to leave the Commune) are backed up at the expense of the majority, because by so doing the Government considered they were creating good sound conservative voters.

In spite of this pressure, and perhaps because

of it (although in some parts of Russia they have displayed eagerness to become the permanent owners of their respective strips of land), up till 1910, only four per cent. of the peasantry availed themselves of the right to exchange their strips for an allotment in one place; and up till January 1, 1912, the Communes who petitioned for deeds numbered only 4,656; and out of 45,994 Communes, only 174,193 petitions were forthcoming, which shows a proportion of one in every three or four.

It is, of course, too soon to generalize on the result of such recent legislation. Comparisons and analogies with similar legislation in other countries—such as Ireland, for instance—would be misleading, for the existence of the Commune is peculiar in Russia. At the present moment the Russian peasant owns land. He either owns strips in the land belonging to the Commune, shares which are liable to periodical redistribution, or else he has become the permanent owner of his strips, or else he has exchanged them for an allotment and started a farm.

At the present moment the peasants own by far the greater part of the arable land in Russia,

and every family owns in arable land at least six acres; and on an average in the densely populated districts, at least 10 acres. In the more thinly populated districts of the north and south, the average increases.

It is clear then that the peasant is an important unit, the most important unit in the nation. It is well then to look into the nature of this important unit, and to see what kind of being he is, and what are the mainsprings of his conduct.

At the outset there probably exists certain preconceived notions which it is as well to get rid of at once.

The first of these is that there is anything servile about the Russian peasant because during two centuries he endured serfdom. "In spite of the period of serfdom through which he has passed," writes Sir Charles Eliot in his *Turkey in Europe*—and Sir Charles Eliot possesses first-hand knowledge of Russia—"the Russian muzhik is not servile; he thinks of God and the Tsar in one category, and of the rest of the world as more or less equal in another."

And Dostoievsky, in writing about Pushkin,

says that one of this poet's chief claims to greatness is that he recognized the intrinsic quality of self-respect in the Russian people, which they proved by the manly dignity of their behaviour when they were liberated from serfdom.

The Russian people, in spite of centuries of serfdom, with the exception of individual instances, were not and never have been slaves.

So much, I think, can be stated without fear of contradiction or controversy. Before going any further I want to clear the ground a little. The reader must be prepared to find, not only in foreign books about Russia, but in Russian books about Russia, and to meet with in conversation not only from foreigners who have travelled and lived in Russia, but in conversation with the Russians themselves, widely divergent and contradictory ideas and opinions with regard to the nature of the Russian peasant. He will hear on one side that he is intelligent, on the other that he is crassly obtuse. On the one hand that he is humane, on the other hand that he is brutal. He will find in Russian literature that by some writers he is exalted as the salt of the earth and the solution of life,

and that by others he is decried as a hopeless, inert mass of ignorance and prejudices. M. Leroy Beaulieu in his *Empire des Tsars* tells a story of how once, when he was travelling on the Volga, a "lady said to him, 'How can you bother yourself about our muzhik? he is a brute, out of which nobody will ever be able to make a man;' and how on the same day a landed proprietor said to him, 'I consider the *contadino* of North Italy to be the most intelligent peasant in Europe, but our muzhik could give him points.'"

Further, most Russians will tell you that the peasant will rarely give himself away, and that to the outside observer of another class he probably is, and will always remain, a sealed book. The net result of all this is that readers may justly say to me, "And what can you know about the subject?" And it is to this very question that I think I owe some sort of reply before continuing to say anything else about the nature of the Russian peasant.

My claims to be in a position to say certain things which I have got first hand about the Russian peasant are not, it is true, great; but I

believe them to exist. They do not rest on what is called erudition. I am no expert in the difficult problems, economic and others, which are connected with the life of the Russian peasantry; but it so happens that I have been thrown together, so to speak, with the Russian peasant under peculiar circumstances. During the years I have spent in Russia I have made friends with peasants in various places, and have often in travelling had much talk and intercourse with them. But it is not chiefly on that that I base my observations—it is on this: that being in Manchuria during the greater part of the Russo-Japanese War, as I drifted about from one part of the army to another I was thrown together with the Russian soldier, who is a peasant, often on terms of absolute equality; that is to say, I was to him no longer a *barin* (one of the upper classes), but a kind of camp follower, of which there were multitudes in Manchuria during the war—a man who, in their eyes, had a *barin* himself. On one occasion I was asked where my *barin* (master) was, and when I said I was my own *barin*, the peasant who was talking to me said he thought I was just a common man.

Thus on many occasions I met, travelled with, and bivouacked with soldiers on their own footing, and shared their food, lodging, and talk *on equal terms*. And it was this experience which gave me glimpses into things, and an insight into certain manners and customs, which I should otherwise have ignored. The knowledge that I thus gleaned was confirmed to me by my subsequent travel in Russia, especially by journeys which I sometimes made in third-class carriages. But all this would not be in itself sufficient to give me any right to talk about the Russian peasant. All this would have given me the material, but not the means of using it. I base my claim to right of using it on one simple fact: I like the Russian peasant very much.

In speaking of Pushkin's love of the Russian peasant, Dostoievsky says: "Do not love me but love mine (that is to say, love what I love). That is what the people says when it wishes to test the sincerity of your love. Every member of the gentry, especially if he is humane and enlightened, can love, that is to say, sympathize with the people on account of its want, poverty, and suffering. But what the people needs is

not that you should love it for its sufferings, but for itself; and what does 'love it for itself' signify? If you love what I love, honour what I honour. That is what it means, and that is what the people will answer to in you; and if it be otherwise, the man of the people will never count you as his own, however great your distress may be on his account."

Well, in saying that I like the Russian peasant very much, I mean that I honour what he honours, and his way of looking at life; his standards of right and wrong seem to me the sound and true.

It is for this reason that, in all humility, I claim the right of deducing certain statements from the experience that I have had amongst the Russian people, and in laying them before the English reader.

Now as to the chief characteristics of the Russian peasant. In the first place, and most important of all, he is intensely religious, and his religion is based on common sense.

"Mysticism," Mr. Chesterton once wrote, "was with Carlyle, as with all its genuine professors, only a transcendent form of common sense. Mysticism and common sense alike con-

sist in a sense of the dominance of certain truths which cannot be formally demonstrated."

In this sense the Russian peasant is a mystic. His religion does not come to him through books or study or spiritual sciences, but it is the outcome of his experience, and of a very hard and bitter experience. The first and cardinal point of the peasant's whole outlook on life is that he believes in God, and that he sees the will of God in all things, and that he regards a man who disbelieves in God as something abnormal, and as something not only abnormal but silly. He believes in God because it seems to him nonsensical not to do so.

It would be easy to call as witnesses on this point a host of the most famous names in Russian literature. But the objection might be made (a false objection in my opinion, but still it might be made) that writers and poets idealize reality, and see in others what they feel in themselves or what they want to see; so from Russian literature I will only call one witness, and that is N. Garin, an engineer, who bought a property in the country and devoted many years solely to farming it, and was thus brought

into daily constant and intimate touch and communication with the peasants.

He begins relating his experiences thus: "By my conversations and intercourse with the peasants I could not help becoming acquainted with their inner life. As I got to know them I was struck on the one hand by their strength, patience, endurance, and by an inflexibility which attained to greatness, which made it easy to understand how the kingdom of Russia had come to be. On the other hand, I met with obduracy, routine, and a dull hostility to every innovation, which made it easy to understand why the Russian peasant lives so miserably. Two brothers lived in a village. One was married and the other was a bachelor. The married brother has five children and a wife, but is himself the only bread-winner; the unmarried brother lives in the family, and helps in the work with all his might, but he is old and ill. The married brother falls sick and dies. The old man is left with the family on his hands; he sets about to support it with the slender strength at his disposal. There are no savings, nothing put by. In the cottage half-naked children are running

about, all with colds; they are crying; the cottage is cold, the atmosphere is foul, the calf squeals, the dead man is lying on the shelf, and on the face of the old man there is an expression of calm, as if all that were quite natural and had to be so.

"'It will be hard for you to feed eight mouths all by yourself?' I ask.

"'And God?' he answered.

"God is all. Starvation is beckoning through the half-broken little window of the rotting house; the last bread-winner dies; there is a heap of children; the sister-in-law (the only woman) is sick; there is no money for the funeral; and he, being questioned as to his lot, answers, 'And God?' And you feel something inexpressibly strong, unconquerable, and great."

I will supplement this story with a little piece of first-hand evidence which I gathered myself. This is only one instance out of a great many which I have come across in the course of my various sojourns in Russia.

It was in a small provincial town some years ago, in the winter. I was walking late in the evening down one of the larger streets. It had been

thawing, and the streets and the pavements were sloshy. It was dark. Just as I was reaching a street corner which faced a large open place, I became aware of the sound of muffled, persistent sobs. I looked round, and I saw sitting on the pavement, with his back to the wall, a little boy, a peasant's child, who was softly crying his eyes out. He was sobbing slowly, not loudly, but persistently; not whining, or crying in the kind of way children cry when they fall down or quarrel, but he seemed to be sobbing out of the fullness of his little heart. He was not trying to attract attention, nor did he pay attention to me or to any one else. He seemed quite unconscious of the surrounding world, and plunged in his own grief. I stopped and asked him what was the matter. He answered that his father had sent him to the town to buy something (I forget what it was), and had given him the money, and that the money had been taken away from him. It was quite a small sum. He was afraid to go home. I at once gave him the money, and the little boy stood up, dried his eyes, and crossed himself. Then, without a word, he went home. He thanked God: it was not

necessary to thank any one else. And I never saw anything like the expression of gratitude on his face as he crossed himself; but to me he did not say one word. What was the use? It was God who had come to his rescue, not I; you might just as well thank the violin after a concert for the beauty of the music.

This is only the story of a child; but the child in Russia, just as anywhere else, is father of the man.

It is difficult to bring home to the average Englishman the way in which religion enters into the daily life of the Russians, and especially into the daily life of the peasants. How often have I heard it said, how often have I read in newspapers, of the dark superstition into which the Russian people is plunged! If it be superstitious to regard religion not as a rather disagreeable episode belonging exclusively to Sunday, then the Russian peasant is superstitious indeed. If it be superstitious to cherish no *mauvaise honte* with regard to religion, not to be ashamed of talking about God as a matter of fact, of saying one's prayers in public, of going to Mass on Sundays and holidays, of fasting during

Lent and other seasons of merrymaking at Easter, of crossing yourself before meals, of invoking the Saints, of revering images and relics, then the Russian peasant is superstitious indeed. But you must not put down such superstition to ignorance, for it has been shared by men such as Saint Augustine, Sir Thomas More, Lord Acton, and Pasteur—none of them what you would call ignorant men.

Sometimes the traveller will note the fact that the Russian peasant will prostrate himself over and over again before an image, or cross himself over and over again mechanically. He will say the thing is an idle form that has no spiritual significance. He will be wrong. The Russian peasant fulfills the form and ritual of his religion as a matter of course. He is not more superstitious in the fulfilling of them than an Englishman is superstitious when he uncovers his head before the colours of a regiment. In the case of a Russian peasant his meticulous observance of ritual and form is just as much a matter of course to him, it is just as much based on common sense as that inflexible belief in God and the working and will of Providence

which Garin so pointedly illustrates in the passage I have quoted above.

The Russian peasant sees things in their true proportion. He believes in God, as a matter of course, because it is plain to him that God exists. He goes to church and observes the formalities of his religion because it is plain to him that is the right thing to do, just as it is plain to the ordinary English citizen that it is right to stand up when "God save the King" is being sung.

The Russian peasant may be, and can be, and often is, as superstitious as you like about other things, but his superstition does not proceed from his religion. His superstitions are likewise a matter of tradition; he believes in the *domovoi*, for instance, the spirit that inhabits houses, well known once to the English peasantry, under the name of the hobgoblin; Milton calls him the drudging goblin:—

> "And he by Friar's lantern led
> Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
> To earn the cream bowl duly set,
> When in one night, ere glimpse of man,
> His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
> That ten day labourers could not end,
> Then lies him down, the lubber-fiend,

And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full, out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings."

The *domovoi* in Russia is merely supposed to inhabit houses. I do not think he is ever suspected of working. He is good-natured but capricious. Each house has its goblin. He sits in the corner underground. If you move from one house to another you must give notice to the goblin and summon him to come with you. If you forget to do this, the goblin will be offended, and stay where he is left, and show marked hostility to the *domovoi* brought by a new tenant. The two goblins will fight; china and furniture will be broken; and this will go on until the first householder comes and invites the goblin to his new house. Then everything will be all right once more.

Garin says that he once said to a peasant: "What, in your opinion, is the *domovoi*—the devil?"

The peasant, quite offended, answered: "Why should he be the devil? He does no harm."

"Then is he an angel?"

"God forbid! How can he be an angel seeing that he's hairy?"

So the peasant agrees with Milton in thinking that the hobgoblin's hide is covered with hair.

The hobgoblin plays the part of a kind of moral barometer to the family, foretelling good or bad fortune. At supper-time he is heard to move, and then the elder of the family asks whether good or evil is impending. If it be bad, the *domovoi* says, "Hu" (Hudo being the Russian for bad); and if good, he mutters, "D . . . D . . . D . . . D . . ." (Dobro being the Russian for good).

To sum up the whole matter briefly, the religion of the Russian peasant is, if you analyze it (a thing which the peasant would, of course, never do), a working hypothesis of the world; or, to take Matthew Arnold's phrase, a criticism of life; and it is more, a solution, a philosophy which he has evolved not from books, not from professors or teachers, but from life itself. It is the fruit of his native common sense. In this observance of the forms of religion he likewise follows what has for him the sanction (*a*) of common sense; (*b*) of immemorial custom.

Such a point of view one would think at first sight was not difficult to grasp. Experience has led me to believe that it is difficult for English people to grasp it. They go to Russia; they see the peasants prostrating themselves in churches, kissing images, taking off their hats as they pass churches; they see crowds feasting on Saint days; they see pilgrims asking for and receiving alms. And they say, "What backward people! How superstitious!" Or again (which is much worse) they say kindly, "What charming people. How picturesque!" In the first case they are being consciously superior, and in the second case they are being unconsciously condescending.

In the first case they are simply pitying people for what they consider retrograde and backward; in the second case they are expressing an admiration whose real source is contempt. They do not know it is contempt, but it is. Their belief in their own superiority is so sure, and so sound, that they no more question it than the Russian peasant questions his belief in God.

It is the same good-natured, easy-going contempt an English workman feels for foreign workmen when he happens to work abroad.

I know of a case of an English gardener who was employed in a French country-house. An Englishman who was there asked him how he liked the French.

"Oh! the French are all right," he said, "if you treat them well. They are quite willing. You mustn't bully them. You must treat them nicely and kindly. Of course *you can't expect them to work like Englishmen.*" He talked of them good-naturedly, tolerantly, as if they were men of another race, and laboured under some great radical natural disadvantage through no fault of their own. Had he been talking of negroes instead of the inhabitants of l'Ile de France you would not have been surprised.

This is exactly the attitude of the many English travellers, and of certain English residents in Russia, towards the Russian people. They do not, since they are not taught it at school—neither in board schools nor in private schools, nor in public schools, nor in grammar schools, and least of all at the universities—know that once the whole of Europe, and especially the English, looked on religion as the Russian peasants do now; or if they do know

this, they thank Heaven that some parts of Europe, and in any case the English, have outgrown this backward ignorance and this dark philosophy.

It is true, and it is only fair to state, that this attitude towards the religion of the Russian peasant is shared to some extent, but in a quite different manner, by the Russian educated classes, and more especially by the semi-educated. Of this I will write later in greater detail. But there is this great difference—the Russian educated and semi-educated classes may sometimes think these religious ideas of the Russian peasants childish; but not because they look on the peasant as a kind of inferior being, a savage or a "native." They think the peasant's religion is childish, because they think all religion is childish (whether the Pope's, the Patriarch's, the Archbishop of Canterbury's, Mrs. Eddy's, Mahomet's, or Buddha's), a thing which they have outgrown. But, as one Russian writer has pointed out, the Russian intellectuals are, on an average, not superior but inferior to the idea of religion, for they have never experienced it; and it is here that their attitude

resembles that of the average Englishman. The average Englishman considers himself religiously almost immeasurably above the Russian peasant in enlightenment; it has never struck him that he may be below him. And until this humble thought strikes him, he will never be able to understand the religion of the Russian peasant.

I was once talking to a lady who had been to Moscow about Russia. She said Moscow was very interesting, but she added: "I suppose it's dreadful of me to say it, but all those *mosques*" (and by the mosques she meant the Cathedral and the Christian churches, which in their rites and customs probably resemble the early centuries of Christianity more closely than any in Europe) "were always so full of poor people, and such dirty people." The idea of a church being a place where no distinction was made between rich and poor, where rich and poor could enter at any time of the day, where rich and poor jostled each other and crowded together in dense crowds to hear Mass on Sunday, was an idea entirely new and entirely foreign to her. And in expressing

this, I venture to think she was below and not above the Russian peasant's standard of religion.

With regard to superstition, superstition is to the Russian peasant a thing quite apart from religion. It fills up a gap for him. In the region of the inexplicable, all matters that religion does not deal with, such as omens, the peasant puts down to other agencies, harmless agencies as a rule, such as hobgoblins; and here again he follows custom.

I have said that the basis of the Russian peasant's religion is common sense. Common sense is likewise the backbone or the mainspring of his material as well as of his spiritual existence, the key to his methods of work and his manner of play, his social code, his habits and customs; in a word, to his practice as well as to his theory.

In the past much has been written on his backwardness, his obduracy, his love of routine, his persistence in remaining in old grooves, his hatred of innovation, his hostility towards all forms of progress. There is, of course, in many individual cases, a great deal of truth in these

charges, but there is something else to be said as well. People are now beginning to say that often what at first sight appears to be wilful obduracy and blind and senseless conservatism is, in nine cases out of ten, merely the choice of the lesser of two evils, a choice obviously dictated by common sense.

It is now being largely recognized by practical experts in agriculture in Russia, that the reason the peasant obstinately adhered to antiquated methods and turned a deaf ear to modern improvements and innovations, was not always that he was stupid, and not necessarily that he was obstinate, but that the improvements and the innovations suggested to him, although admirable in themselves, were, given his particular circumstances, likely to cause him more harm than good; the main fact being that he was too poor to take advantage of them; that the older method was the lesser evil, the newer method being the cause of a greater evil.

I will give a few instances of what I mean.

It is an admitted fact in countries that have

a continental climate that the earth will only retain a sufficient quantity of moisture if it is ploughed early in spring and remains ploughed throughout the summer. Consequently the fallow land should be ploughed early in spring for the winter-sown crops. The peasant knows this well, but he does not plough early in spring, he ploughs late in summer; but if you ask him why, he puts to you the unanswerable question, "Where shall I put my cattle, if I plough early in the spring?"—the only place for his cattle being the fallow land, since all the remaining part of his land consists of growing crops. As soon as the harvest is over he can, of course, use the stubble for his cattle. This is an instance of what seems to be at first sight backward obstinacy, and is in reality expediency—the choice of the lesser evil, dictated by common sense.

At one time every effort was being made to persuade the peasant to use a modern improved plough instead of the primitive instrument he preferred, which resembled that in use in the days of Abraham. He often refused to do so; but why? Not because he had anything against

the new plough as an instrument, but because if he had not enough capital to buy one (its cost being 50 roubles = £5), and if he borrowed money from a rich peasant to do so, he risked losing all his substance; he risked being sold up in order to pay his debts. So in this case, the old-fashioned plough (which cost him only five roubles = 10s.) was a lesser evil than complete ruin.

But, on the other hand, it has now been proved that as soon as the peasant can get the necessary capital, as soon as he can obtain credit from co-operative credit associations, he does not hesitate to buy iron ploughs, or even Canadian corn-cutters, or any modern implement you like to mention.

Scientific agriculture is being widely taught at the present moment in Russia. Agricultural colleges are spreading, and the number of agricultural students is every day increasing. But it is the firm conviction of the most learned of the scientific agriculturists that all you can do for the peasant is to open for him doors on possibilities of teaching him what can be done; but that if it comes to teaching him *how* to do a

thing, you cannot. He knows *how* to do everything much better than any theorist. Centuries of close and constant contact with the soil have taught him more than all the learning and all the theory in the world. You can bring to his notice new methods for him to try, new experiments; you can submit new possibilities to him; you can enlarge his horizon to any extent; you can educate him; you can provide him with new instruments; but in the practical use and application of knowledge it is he who will teach you, and not you who will teach him. He has the experience that only practice and centuries of practice can give.

Not long ago one of the best known of the scientific Russian agriculturists spoke in this sense to some young students. He bade them remember that their whole task consisted in suggesting possibilities to the peasants; but if they met with opposition, they must never insist, for the peasant probably knew best, his knowledge being the fruit of the accumulated experience of countless generations. I believe, and I know that many Russians agree with me, that the history, the life, the philosophy, and

the religion of the Russian peasants illustrate one immense fact: that the majority is always right in the long run. *Vox populi, vox Dei.* He may have temporary aberrations; but give him time, in the long run his view will be the right view.

But some one may say, "Surely you do not wish to advance the dangerous and doctrinaire view that the land should be entirely in the hands of the peasant; for you have already stated that the peasant believes that the land is his, and that all the land should be in the hands of those that till it? Surely you are not in favour of the wholesale expropriation of land —of the total abolition of landlords?"

My answer to this is, "Yes, I think the peasant is *right in the long run*, and I think he is right in thinking that in the long run the land not only should be, but will be, his."

At the present moment there are two kinds of landowners in Russia:—

1. Absentee landowners, who rent their land to the peasant on short leases (on an average from one to six years) without sinking any capital either in buildings or in any other improve-

ments.* A large portion (as I have already said) of the land thus rented to peasants by absentee landlords was sold to the peasants (with the assistance of the State land banks) in 1905; and it is generally admitted that the remainder, all the land still rented to the peasants, should become their permanent property. This is what is actually happening (slowly and gradually), with the assistance, again, of land banks.

With regard to the land farmed by the landowners, the question is different. Such farming is carried on, as a rule, on a very large scale, at a great expenditure of capital, which is sunk in the land.

At one time (in 1905) wholesale and immediate expropriation of all the land owned by the landowners was advocated by some political parties and individuals as the solution of the land question in Russia.

* From this will be seen the difference between a Russian absentee landowner and an English landlord. The English landlord is essentially a partner in the farming, even if he does not farm the land himself, because he will always sink a certain amount of capital in buildings and their upkeep, whereas the Russian absentee landowner invests no capital in anything: he merely receives the rent. In some cases even the land taxes are paid by the tenant.

But a wholesale act of expropriation, if put into force immediately, would not only bring about an economic crisis affecting the landowner, but it would reduce the standard of farming and diminish the productive capacity of the land, and impoverish the peasants themselves.

The peasants, possessing little or no capital, would not be able to maintain the high standard of farming carried on by the landowners; and if the land hitherto farmed on this high standard were suddenly to be made over to them, they would earn less by trying to farm it without capital than they earn at present by working on the landowners' land.

If, then, wholesale and immediate expropriation is out of the question as a wise, practical, and beneficent measure, why and how is the peasant right in looking forward to the day when all the land will belong to him?

Before such a state of things can be brought about, two things must happen to the peasant. He must acquire (*a*) capital, (*b*) a wider instruction in agricultural methods and a more extensive general instruction—in a word, a better education.

This is actually happening now. The peasant is enabled to acquire capital through the existence of co-operative credit associations and land banks. And everywhere now, all over Russia, agricultural schools are increasing and instruction in improved agricultural methods is spreading. The creation of a body of agricultural experts stationed throughout the country under the supervision of the county councils, in order to advise the peasants and farmers on matters of agriculture, and the establishment of experimental farming stations on a comprehensive scale, have done this.

When the peasant will be in possession of sufficient capital and instruction (and there does not appear to be anything Utopian in this prospect) in order to compete with the landowner who farms his own land, he will gradually oust the landowner altogether. Once possessed of the same means as the landlord, he will not only be his equal, but his superior; he will supersede him; he will be the master of the situation, and in the long run he will become *ipso facto* the owner of all the arable land in Russia; and the change could thus come about without any eco-

nomic crisis, and without imperilling the interests of the State.

People may perhaps wonder why, during the revolutionary ferment of 1905–6, when there was so much talk of expropriation in the air, when there was so much agricultural disturbance all over Russia, the peasants did not simply take all the land belonging to the landowners. It is not a sufficient answer to say the soldiery, remaining loyal, prevented any such thing. The soldiers are peasants, and there was probably not one soldier among them who was not convinced that the land belonged to the tillers of it by right.

It will perhaps not be thought fantastic if I here again repeat, as an answer to this question, the democratic theory, which I know is so distasteful to many, that the majority are always right; that the peasants, in a vague and inarticulate fashion, vaguely knew or dimly felt that if they did such a thing the only immediate result would be wholesale anarchy; and that it was their fundamental common sense which unconsciously led them to insist on the partial sale of the land let to them by the landowners,

and to rest contented for the moment with this preliminary step. They would, of course, not be able to explain the matter thus; but this was in all probability the explanation of their conduct.

I repeat here, lest the reader should think I am foisting on him fantastic stuff and idealistic theory, that the individual peasant is as often as not obstinate, lazy, and backward; that all the peasants are in need not only of wider instruction in agricultural methods, but also of general all-round education.

The individual peasant would not come out with any theory as to the lesser of two evils; he would probably defend his backward practice as being the best, or as being that which had always been followed.

Nevertheless, in spite of this, those habits of the peasant which are the result of accumulated experience have, if you look into them, a fundamental basis of common sense, even though the individual peasant may be unaware of the fact. The immemorial popular tradition and custom, the stored and accumulated wisdom of the peasantry (to which the immense quantity of popular

proverbs and saws which exist in Russia are as the leaves are to a tree) according to which they act as a body, will be found to be sound and right in the long-run, although the average individual peasant may be unable to give any reason for accepting and following the dictates of that wisdom which is his inheritance; he may be not only incapable of defining it, he may be unaware of its existence. But as a member of the community to which he belongs he will nevertheless apply that wisdom, as circumstances call for it, and express it by the acts of his daily life; and his individual voice will be a part of that larger voice which has sometimes been thought to be identical with the voice of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE NOBILITY.

THE very word nobility in connection with Russia is misleading. There is no English word which is the equivalent of the Russian word for nobility—*dvorianstvo*. In French, there are two words, *noblesse de cour*, which correspond to the Russian word.

The Russian word *dvorianin*, which we translate, for want of a better word, noble, means a man attached to a Court, and courtier would be the right translation, if courtier did not happen to mean something else. The Russian noble is a Court servant, who is entitled by the service he renders to the State to an hereditary rank. Nobility accrues by right to the man who has reached a certain definite step or *tchin* in the army or in the civil service.

The service, moreover, is open to everybody

who can pass a certificate examination at the end of his school time. During the whole of the eighteenth century, and the first part of the nineteenth century, from the reign of Peter the Great to the end of the reign of Alexander I., every single officer of the nobility army, and every single civil servant holding an equivalent rank, became *ipso facto* a noble.

The lowest rank in the army, that of an ensign, conferred the right of nobility.*

Later on, in 1822, in 1845, and in 1855, the grade which conferred hereditary nobility was raised.

The net result of all this is that (*a*) the nobility as a class is enormous (in European Russia the hereditary nobility number about 600,000); (*b*) there can be nothing aristocratic about such a nobility.

This does not mean that the descendants of old families do not exist in Russia. Such fami-

* Besides this hereditary nobility there was what is called personal nobility, which was not hereditary. (This fact is without any great importance; it simply means that when bureaucracy was established in Russia it was necessary to distinguish between higher and lower grades of public servants, and personal nobility simply conferred rights of independence, at a time when only nobles and public servants possessed any such recognized rights.)

lies exist, and are, perhaps, more ancient than any in Europe. Moreover, a certain number of names and families stand out amidst the encircling obscurity, some of them illustrious with an almost fabulous antiquity, like names in a saga or an epic, and others illustrious from great services rendered in more modern times. Russian history is "bright with names that men remember;" on the one hand names recalling those of the Knights of the Round Table or the heroes of the Niebelungenlied, on the other hand names resembling that, say, of the Duke of Wellington.

Titles have little to do with the matter: amongst this little band of the illustrious, some of the families have titles of recent origin; others, again, almost incredibly remote both in lineage and fame, have no titles at all.

The great mass of the nobility have neither title nor any outward sign to distinguish them from the herd of nobles, with the exception of the collateral branches of the royal family.

Russia was originally a conglomeration of small principalities (all descending from, all collateral branches of, one prince), grouped at one time

under the leadership of Kiev, and later on absorbed by the principality of Moscow, which eventually became first a kingdom, and then *the* kingdom. When Moscow absorbed all the minor principalities, the princes, bereft of their principalities, still retained their titles. "Prince" is, therefore, the only true Russian title that exists in Russia.

The titles of graf (count) and baron are borrowed from Western Europe. There is no word either for count or baron in the Russian language, and the German terms are used. These titles are confined to a few families, and are either titles of recent creation, conferred by the sovereign for special services, or they denote families of foreign extraction and origin.

About two-thirds of the princely families descend from the ancient sovereigns of Russia, and about forty of them go as far back as Rurick, the oldest of all Russian sovereigns. Such are the families of the Dolgoruky, Bariatinsky, Obolensky, Gortchakov, Khovansky, Galitsin, Trubetskoy.

As far as lineage and antiquity are concerned, these families are as old as any in Europe; but

in spite of the existence of these ancient families, whose ramifications are innumerable (for instance, there are about three or four hundred Galitsins, male and female), there is no such thing in Russia as a political aristocracy.

One of the causes of this state of things is probably the democratic system which prevails in every Russian family, be it that of a prince or of a peasant, of dividing property equally amongst the whole family; and as the title is likewise inherited by every member of the family as the process of subdivision goes on, it sometimes happens that the sole inheritance of the descendant of an illustrious family is his name.

One would have thought this constant process of subdivision must have ultimately decimated all the large estates in Russia. It probably would have done so had it not been for the size of the country, the perpetual opening out of new territory, the unceasing colonization of such remnants, and the consequent rise in the value of land.

Moreover, the division of property is made among the male members of the family only

The female members of a family receive only a fourteenth share of the patrimony; they receive a marriage portion, and sometimes nothing besides.*

There is also in Russia, as everywhere else, what the French would call "*une aristocratie mondaine.*" Even here there is less spirit of caste than in other European countries. It is impossible to define what constitutes and what limits this society in Russia, just as it is impossible to define what constitutes the limits of any such society anywhere. It has nothing necessarily to do with the governing class, and nothing to do with the great mass of the nobility, and nothing necessarily to do with illustrious names or services, and is hall-marked neither by wealth nor by titles, but by a freemasonry of manner and culture. It is a society consisting of many separate groups, which live their own life and touch each other at certain points. Thus in St. Petersburg there is an *erste Gesell-*

* It is perhaps as well to note here that the Russian law counterbalances this state of affairs by giving the right to women, even during the lifetime of their husbands, of enjoying and administrating their own property. The Russian woman is not a minor in the eyes of the law as in France.

schaft, who all talk French as a matter of course, and very often English as well, and who at one time talked French better than their own language. The younger generation of this class, however, know Russian well.

Thus it is that in speaking of the Russian nobility as a whole and as a class—and it is a vast class—the English reader must put out of his head all ideas of aristocracy such as it existed in England, France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and realize the following facts :—

1. The noble in Russia is a State servant.
2. Any one can enter the State service if he passes the requisite examination.
3. The attainment of a certain rank in the State service carries with it the rights of hereditary nobility.
4. There is no political aristocracy in Russia.
5. Until 1861 only the nobility had the right to own land in Russia.
6. There is no such thing as a territorial aristocracy in Russia.

How is it, then, that if until this year 1861 the nobility alone had the right of owning land in Russia, there is no such thing as a territorial

aristocracy? And how is it, if innumerable descendants of old princely families exist at the present moment in Russia, there is no such thing as a political aristocracy?

The answer to these two questions is to be found in the history of the past, and, without going into any elaborate historical disquisition, the roots of the matter are fairly easy to trace.

In the earlier times of Russian history, long before the invasion of the Tartars, before the Norman Conquest in England, Russia was divided into principalities, which were governed by princes. Every prince had a body of followers, who constituted around his person a kind of armed militia. This militia was called the *druzhina*. Its members were free. They could serve whom they pleased. They could pass from the service of one prince to another. Out of this class of armed servants arose the *boyars*, who were likewise the voluntary servants of the princes, and who could serve whichever prince they pleased. They were naturally inclined to choose the richest and most powerful prince, and thus they were attracted to the Court of Moscow,

and thus the minor principalities became weaker in resources and poorer in followers, and were gradually absorbed one after another by the Grand Duchy of Moscow. And when Moscow became the central and predominant kingdom of Russia, the boyars became the servants of the Tsar of Moscow. But the boyars did not serve the monarch for nothing; in return for their service they received land. Originally the servants of the princes were remunerated for their services by receiving allotments of land, which passed from father to son, as well as by money, and the revenues accruing from certain Government appointments. Had the boyars continued to possess hereditary allotments, and nothing but hereditary allotments, they might have grown into a caste of territorial aristocrats. As it was, as Russia grew bigger, and when Northern Russia was annexed to the kingdom of Moscow, the only new sources of capital were the immense stretches of new land acquired by the Tsar of Moscow. Henceforward the Tsar, instead of giving the boyars hereditary allotments of land in return for their service, gave them temporary allotments of land in the newly-

acquired territory. These allotments were in theory supposed to belong to the Tsar's servant so long, and so long only, as he served, but in practice they generally belonged to the owner during the whole of his lifetime. A grant of land of this kind was called a *pomestie* (manor), and the owner of it a *pomeshchik*, which came in the course of time to be, and is at present, the ordinary Russian word for a landowner.

Thus the Tsar accomplished at one swoop many different objects. He distributed the men of service in the interior and at the frontier of the country, and by granting them only the temporary lease of the land in distant parts of the country, he prevented the growth of a strong landed aristocracy whose existence and rivalry he feared. He made these newly-created landowners into a barrier against foreign invasion, and into an instrument of national defence; the land became a means for the upkeep of the army, since the landowners constituted the army, and the armed servant in return for his service received land, which, in addition to being a wage, made that service possible by giving him a means of upkeep.

The principle was established that the servant of the State should be rewarded for his services by the possession of land; and soon the corollary followed that the owner of land *must* serve.

Hereditary holdings still existed; but gradually the right of administrating them came to depend on service. In the sixteenth century, in the kingdom of Moscow, all owners of hereditary holdings were State servants. A man who inherited a holding was obliged to serve if he wished to continue to possess the hereditary ownership of it.

Thus it was that the nobility in Russia acquired the dual nature of landowner and servant of the State. The servant of the State became a landowner, and only on the condition of being a servant of the State, as has already been stated.

The result of all this was that the nobility took no roots in the land. Their interest was at Court. Their land was merely their pay. Thus no landed or territorial aristocracy came into existence, as in other European countries. In Russia there are no feudal castles, no families taking their names from places, no titles derived from property, no *von* and *zu*, no *de*, no Lord So-

and-So of So-and-So; comparatively few stone houses. The noble generally lives in a wooden house, which has the nature of a temporary makeshift residence.

Nevertheless there was an obstinate attempt on the part of the Russian nobility to form a political aristocracy.

The boyars, grouping themselves round the throne of Moscow, attempted to do this. They organized themselves into a complicated hierarchy, according to which precedence depended on the pedigree of their forefathers. The duties and position of each boyar was written down in a complicated kind of peerage called "books of pedigree." His rank had to remain exactly what that of his forefathers had been.

Organized in this fashion, the boyars became an hereditary, stationary, and exclusive caste, perpetually quarrelling over questions of pedigree, the rights and wrongs of which were extremely difficult to determine.

By the time Ivan the Terrible came to the throne (1547) the boyars were individually powerful, but the very nature of such an organization precluded all idea of solidarity and

union. Every single noble wished to be *primus inter pares*. Every family was at war with its equals. Ivan the Terrible dealt with the boyars individually by cutting off their heads. The books of pedigree were abolished in the reign of Peter the Great's predecessor, and the name boyar was abolished by Peter the Great.

Henceforward the service of your forefathers was no longer of any account. Neither lineage nor rank counted any longer. Your rank depended henceforth on your *tchin*—that is to say, the post you held in the service of the State; and that, in its turn, depended on your personal merit, on the nature of your service. The Russian nobility became a class of State servants in which the hereditary principle ceased to exist; and although some of the privileges which Peter the Great took away from the hereditary nobility were restored to them by his successors, the great fabric of the State service which he created still exists. So does the *tchin*, with its fourteen grades, created by Peter the Great. A boy leaving his college or gymnasium, and having passed what the Germans call his *abiturienten examen*, and what in some of our public schools is called a

certificate examination, has access to the lowest rung of the official ladder.

University degrees confer a *tchin* on the student, and with every fresh diploma he receives he ascends a further rung of the ladder. For instance, a son of a peasant, if he goes to school, passes his examinations, and finishes his course at the university, may serve, say, in the department of Railway Traffic Organization, and by ascending one grade of the ladder after another, he may, partly by luck and partly by merit, end by being Minister of Finance or Prime Minister.

The successors of Peter the Great exempted the nobility from compulsory service; and Catherine II. not only confirmed this exemption, but increased and enlarged the privileges of the nobility. She made the nobility into a privileged class. In order to prepare the way for local self-government, she created intermediate powers between the throne and the people, and gave the nobility a part to play in local administration, and roped in the merchants to co-operate with them, thus endeavouring to form a *bourgeoisie*. The nobility enjoyed the privilege of appointing local justices

of the peace and local officials. The administration of every district had to pass through the hands of the nobility in the shape of a marshal, in some respects a kind of lord-lieutenant*; one presided over every district, and one over every province, and both were elected by the Assembly of Nobles. The theory was that the influence of the marshals of the nobility would counterbalance the action of the governor of the province, an official appointed directly by the Crown. This was the theory, and a theory it more or less remained owing to the apathy of the nobility, who failed to take full advantage of their privileged situation. Nevertheless the nobility did play a considerable part in local administration; and consequently, in proportion as they tended to become bureaucrats, they ceased being landowners. They had less and less time to look after their property. They ceased, for the greater part, to be practical and practising landowners, and they left the management of their estates in the hands of their stewards, and often used their estates as a means of raising money, so that in 1859, on the eve of the emancipation, two-thirds

* See page 114.

of the estates and the nobility were in pawn, and the remaining third was often mortgaged to individuals.

The privileges granted to the nobility by the successors of Peter the Great could not fail to affect the peasantry. The peasants were at this time tethered to the soil. Peter the Great had tightened the bonds which attached them to the soil, and Catherine II. had done nothing to loosen their bonds. In fact, the situation of the peasants, instead of improving, had grown worse. The rights of the master over the serf had been extended. The master had the power of dealing administratively with the serf; he could banish him to Siberia, sentence him to penal servitude, and could sell him apart from the land. The situation of the serf was not only crying out for reform, but the peasants knew and complained that the whole logical principle of the case for serfdom had been violated.

The peasantry rightly considered that serfdom was a temporary measure coinciding with the compulsory service of the nobility. If the nobility ceased to serve the Tsar, logically they should cease to serve the nobility, because the

nobility were only given the land on condition of serving the Tsar, and on that condition alone, and the peasants belonged to the land.

The discontent of the peasants expressed itself in risings, which were sometimes serious, and the moral feeling against the existence of serfdom became stronger and stronger. And since the nobles were too much occupied with other affairs to look after their estates in person, and their serfs in a patriarchal fashion, there was, as has already been said in Chapter I., no possible argument left in favour of serfdom.

Nevertheless, as Catherine II. saw clearly, the emancipation of the serfs could only be carried out with the co-operation of the nobility. In her reign the time had not come for this, because the nobility were opposed to the reform. The reform came about in 1861, and by it the nobility lost the unique privilege of being the only class in Russia able to own land, and the access to landed proprietorship in Russia was thrown open to all classes.

When the immense act of expropriation which the emancipation of the serfs entailed took place, about half the landowners in Russia disappeared.

Quite a new and mixed class of landowners came into existence: merchants and absentee landowners who leased their land to the peasants, and finally those who sunk their capital in the land and tried to carry on agriculture on rational principles.

I have already spoken of the result of absentee landownership in Russia, and the further sales of land which were made to the peasants in 1905, and of the exemption of the peasantry from compulsory communal land tenure. Looking back on the situation now, one is aware that the landed nobility in Russia is being slowly and gradually oozed out of existence; it is being subjected to a slow process of expropriation in favour of the peasants, the merchants, and the new capitalists; and in the course of time, as soon as the peasantry has the means, the capital, and the knowledge to compete with it on equal terms, the nobility as a caste of landowners will disappear altogether.

The two questions which I put towards the beginning of this chapter: How is it there exists no political aristocracy in Russia? and, How is it that there exists no territorial aristocracy, in spite of the fact that until 1861 the nobility had

the exclusive right of owning the land? can perhaps be answered thus :—

There is no political aristocracy in Russia, because as far back as we can see in Russian history we find no traces of that spirit of caste and solidarity which creates a compact body, sharing a common outlook, and pursuing a definite political and social aim. As far back as we can see in Russian history the nobles were State servants, and when they were given privileges which were not dependent on service, they were powerless to make themselves into anything else. They had neither the instinct nor the desire to do so.

There have in Russian history been aristocrats, but no aristocracy; and when those aristocrats were powerful, they were bound together by no *esprit de corps*, and by no common object: thus it was easy for the Crown to disintegrate them.

There has been no territorial aristocracy, because the land was a temporary loan made to the nobility in return for service. When the service ceased to be compulsory, the land was at once reclaimed by its original owners, the men who tilled it. A hundred years after service

ceased to be compulsory for the nobles the peasants were given back a great part of the land, and ever since then they have been gradually getting back more and more of it, and in the course of time there is no doubt that they will end by getting back all of it.

The Russian nobility is a thing apart. An aristocracy on the Western European pattern no more exists in Russia than do feudal castles on the European pattern. There is an analogy between the flat uniform surface of the landscape in Russia, the absence of sharp mountain ranges and deep valleys, of variety and variegated features, and the nature of Russian institutions. The Russian nobility is, like the Russian landscape, devoid of sharp features—all one level. It is democratic, and averse to the prominence of individual personalities. All the features that are characteristic of aristocratic tendencies, such as primogeniture, spirit of caste, class exclusiveness, do not exist. The Russian nobility is democratic, and it lacks the salient features and the sharp and defined character which has distinguished in the past the nobility in the other countries of Europe.

It may very likely now occur to the reader to ask if there is not and never has been such a thing as a political aristocracy in Russia; and if the Russian nobility is so democratic, why was there ever any discontent in Russia? Why was there such a thing as Nihilism and a revolutionary movement?

It would seem at first sight that a system in which rank was entirely dependent on merit, and in which the service was open to everybody, left nothing to be desired, as far as democracy is concerned. In certain respects it is obviously democratic, in others it is fatal to all free democracy.

The principle, of course, is as democratic as possible; but what happens in practice? In practice you have a gigantic machine worked by a governing class of officials which is absolutely uncontrolled by public opinion.

Any one can get into the governing class, that is true; but nobody who is not in it can check its action, and at one period nobody could even criticize it. The result is the triumph of bureaucracy at the expense of any kind of democracy or of any kind of aristocracy; while the only thing that profits by it is arbitrary despotism.

And though the system is theoretically favourable to the advancement of merit, it is a thousand times more favourable to mediocrity, routine, office-hunting, officialdom, red-tape, to the stifling of all individual initiative, and the shirking of all moral responsibility. The chief evil result of the system was the uncontrolled arbitrary character of the central government and the local administration as carried on by the provincial governors and other officials of the Government; and it was against this arbitrariness that public opinion in Russia revolted, and expressed itself either by militant acts of revolt, assassinations, or explosions, or peaceably in a demand for political reform. And in this peaceable demand the nobility played an important part.

I have already said that Catherine II. gave privileges to the nobility with the idea of preparing the way for local self-government. She knew that in her time such institutions could only be elementary, and that real local self-government was impossible, since besides the nobility and the merchants, the rest of the population were serfs; but she determined to lay the foun-

dations of self-government, and to prepare the way for the future. She gave the nobility privileges which in other countries must certainly have led to a conflict with the Crown; but in her time nothing of the kind happened, since the nobility took no advantage of their situation. But the situation which she created did ultimately lead to a conflict with the Crown, because it was the organs of the local self-government which voiced the demand for representative institutions in Russia, and headed the movement which obtained them. The first step towards local self-government was made by Catherine II., the second step was made by Alexander II. In 1864, in addition to the Assemblies of Nobles, Zemstvos (county councils) were created, containing representatives of every class; later, the nobility and the peasants elected their representatives. Every district of every government or province was given a Zemstvo, or county council; and above this (and formed from the district councils) each government or province was given a county council. Both the district and the provincial county councils were presided over by the marshals of the nobility.

Here were the means and the instrument at least of checking the uncontrolled action of the bureaucratic machine; but the natural corollary of local self-government—namely, central political representation—was for the time lacking. Moreover, from time to time the officials appointed by the Government were given powers to check the action of the county councils.

Ten years passed. The enthusiasm which greeted the era of reform in the 'sixties died out in a smoke of disillusion, and a revolutionary movement sprang up, and a Nihilist fever, culminating in the assassination of the Emperor Alexander II. in 1881, when he was on the eve of granting a constitution to Russia. This shelved all question of reform for another twenty-five years; a period of sheer reaction followed; and it was not until the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 that the public discontent found expression in a manner which had to be reckoned with.

It was now that the Zemstvos played a supremely important part. They headed the constitutional demand for reform, which had developed side by side with a revolutionary movement. And they obtained first the promise of

a consultative House of Representatives, and finally, on October 17, 1905, a charter promising to the people the foundations of civic liberty, the convocation of a Duma, and the promise that no laws should in future be passed without receiving the sanction of the representatives of the nation. The rank and file of the army which brought this to pass were the whole of the educated middle class of Russia, but its leaders and spokesmen were the members of the nobility in the county councils. It was not the nobility as a class which acted and brought this about, but the instruments of local government, the county councils; and every single organ of local government, each county council, had at the head of it a member of the nobility. So far, then, from acting as a separate caste, the Russian nobility, in the movement and demand for reform and emancipation, simply expressed the opinion of the man in the street; and this was all the easier, for the simplest definition of the Russian noble, and one which sums up the whole matter, is that in Russia the noble is almost every tenth man in the street.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GOVERNMENT MACHINE.

UP till October 30, 1905 (O.S., October 7), Russia was an unlimited autocracy. The Emperor bore the title of Unlimited Autocrat of all the Russias. But Russia possessed, nevertheless, certain administrative and legislative institutions. There was a consultative assembly called the Council of Empire, founded by Alexander I., whose business it was to make laws; and a Senate, founded by Peter the Great, an administrative institution, whose business it was to see that the laws and the Emperor's ukases were carried out. The Emperor could always issue special ukases, and he could suggest any laws to the Ministers whom he appointed.

The initiative of legislation was in the hands of the Emperor's Ministers. They presented laws to the Council of Empire, which discussed and

amended them, and presented them, together with the findings of the majority and the minority, and sometimes the finding of an individual member, which were the outcome of their deliberations, to the Emperor for his sanction. In this manner the fundamental laws of the empire were drawn up.

On October 30, 1905, this state of things was profoundly modified by the publication of an imperial manifesto which laid down certain new principles of government.

If these principles were carried out in practice, Russia would no longer be an unlimited autocracy. What it would exactly be is a little difficult to define. In the old days the Government of Russia was defined as being an autocracy tempered by assassination. It would be difficult to define it exactly as it is at the present moment. It is a limited autocracy; an autocracy limited indirectly by the existence of legislative institutions.

At the same time, it was technically a mistake to call the manifesto a constitution, because the Sovereign did not categorically divest himself of his autocratic rights; he took no oath to any

constitution; all he did was to grant his subjects certain privileges, which, if carried out, would limit the purely autocratic character of his power. He himself remained an autocrat. He could, if he saw fit to do so in the future, take back the privileges he had granted. The manifesto was a charter rather than a constitution. It promised to the people the foundations of civic liberty based on the liberty of the person, liberty of conscience, liberty of speech, and the right of forming unions, societies, and associations. It announced that a National Assembly (the Duma) would be convoked, elected by the people, who would henceforward be called upon to cooperate in the government of the country. It laid down the principle that in future no law should come into force without previously receiving the sanction of the Parliament.

A National Assembly elected by the people was not a new phenomenon for Russia. Ever since 1550 National Assemblies appear from time to time in the course of Russian history. They failed to become a permanent feature and factor in Russian life owing to the strife of classes. The population split up into classes, and this was due to the

birth of economic problems and the manner in which they were solved; the peasants became slaves in the hands of the landowners, and the National Assembly ceased to be national, and became representative of an upper class which was divided against itself, owing to the conflicting personal interests it fostered.

The Emperor Nicholas II. in convoking a National Council was not creating a new precedent, but resuscitating an old one. The word Duma means Council, and the Tsars of Moscow in olden times had governed with the aid of an assembly of nobles called the Council of Boyars.

When the manifesto was issued in 1905, it was clear that the fundamental laws of the empire made no provision for a Duma, and that if a Duma were to assemble on the basis of the manifesto, its situation in the State and its relation to the Sovereign would be undefined. For this reason a revised version of the fundamental laws of the empire was confirmed and published on April 23, 1906.

This revised edition of the fundamental laws defined the position of the Sovereign with

regard to the Duma. According to its provisions, the supreme autocratic power was vested in the person of the Emperor; but according to another section it was laid down that the Sovereign exercises legislative power in conjunction with the Council of Empire and the Duma.

The principle of the manifesto that no law should come into force without previously receiving the sanction of the legislative institution was confirmed.

The Emperor retained the title of Autocrat, and concentrated in his person the legislative, executive, and judicial powers; but the substantive "Autocrat" was no longer preceded by the adjective "Unlimited."

The executive powers of the Sovereign entitled him to convene, adjourn, and prorogue the Council of Empire and the Duma; to dissolve the Duma; and to dismiss the elected members of the Council of Empire before the term of their mandates, but not without fixing the date of fresh selections and of the session of a new Duma.

The Emperor retained the right of appointing

the president, the vice-president, and half the members of the Council of Empire; the right of veto, and the sanction of laws; the sole initiative of any changes in the fundamental laws; and, as has already been said, he shared the initiative in all branches of legislation with both the Houses.

The Emperor also retained the right of issuing special ukases, sanctioning unforeseen expenditure not provided for in the Estimates, for emergencies in case of war, and loans for expenditure in war.

The fundamental laws also contained an emergency clause of another kind, according to which the Emperor, by special ukase, can promulgate laws in cases of emergency when the Houses are not in session, subject to their being subsequently submitted to them for approval. But no change may be made in the fundamental laws in virtue of this clause, nor may it modify the legislative institutions and the electoral laws for the two Houses. Moreover, any regulation made in this way ceases to be in force if, in two months after the beginning of the session of the Duma, no Bill is introduced by the Duma

confirming it, or if a Bill is introduced and rejected.*

The executive powers of the Emperor consist in the appointment and dismissal of the Prime Minister and the Ministers, the direction of foreign affairs, the proclamation of martial law and any modified kind of martial law, and the command of the military and naval forces.

The Emperor has also certain judicial powers, such as the confirmation of the verdicts of criminal courts.

At this moment, then, the legislative institutions of Russia consist of the Council of Empire and the Duma. The Council of Empire is the Upper House; half of its members are elected, and they receive their mandates in certain proportions from the synod, the nobility, the universities, the corporation of merchants, and from Poland. They are elected for a term of nine years. The remaining members (including the president and the vice-president) are appointed by the Emperor.

* Contrary to this last provision, the clause was taken advantage of by the Government in 1907 to make a new electoral law which changed the nature of the franchise. This was illegal, and according to the fundamental laws, a *coup d'état*.

The Upper House shares with the Lower House the right of initiative in legislation, as well as that of voting supplies and of making interpellations.

The Lower House, as has just been said, has also the right of initiative legislation; but certain subjects, according to the fundamental laws, are outside its competence—namely, the institutions of the imperial court; the imperial family; war and naval departments; the jurisdiction of military and naval courts.

On the other hand, the imperial budget and the budgets of individual Ministries, and the authorization of loans, are within its competency. It has also the right of making interpellations. There is not, as in the English House of Commons, a certain time put aside every day for questions. Notice is given of interpellation, and the question of whether it shall be regarded as pressing or not is put to the vote. If expedition is voted for, the interpellation must be answered by the Ministers within a month; if extreme expedition is voted for, within three days; if expedition is not voted for, the answer is given within an indefinite period.

The right of interpellation, and the larger fact that an assembly exists where discussion of public affairs is public, are, as is the case with most Parliaments, the chief assets in the influence of the Duma. As far as actual legislation is concerned, the Upper House can throw out any of the Bills which the Lower House passes.

The electoral law is exceedingly complicated. The degree of suffrage it confers is very far from being universal. In the first place, elections are indirect; in every government voters elect a certain number of electors, who in their turn elect members to represent the government in the Duma. Only males who have reached the age of twenty-five have the right to vote; and all those who are in any branch of military service are excluded.

The voters are (*a*) those who vote by property qualification—that is to say, persons residing in the various districts who can satisfy a property qualification, the amount and classification of which depends upon their occupation. For instance, landowners are classified according to the amount of land they possess, and merchants or all persons engaged in commercial pursuits, accord-

ing to their trade licence. This class of voter must either own immovable property, hold a trade licence, be in the receipt of a pension and salary arising from his employment in the Government, municipal, or railway service, or be the occupant of a lodging hired in his name.

For such voters one year's residence in the polling district is required.

As the qualification is high, the number of voters is necessarily limited.

(*b*) A second class of voter consists of peasants whose names are on the rolls of the rural communities—that is to say, heads of households. One year's residence in the polling district is necessary for them also.

(*c*) A third class, consisting of town voters, artisans, and employees in factories, works, and railway shops. Six months' residence in polling district is required.

An election is carried on thus :—

All the voters are divided into five groups : Landowners ; peasants ; town voters (two groups according to their property qualification) ; artisans, etc.

Each of these groups elects separately, by a sys-

tem of two degrees, a certain number of electors who shall represent them at a general meeting of the government or province. This large Provincial Assembly, consisting of landowners, peasants, and town dwellers, meets together, and elects a certain number of members to represent the government or province in the Duma. In this assembly the landed class interest and the richer merchants and town dwellers have the advantage in numbers, and are consequently in the majority. In order therefore to safeguard to a certain extent the interests of the other classes, the Government Assembly must first of all elect one member to represent each of the following classes :—

(*a*) The peasants ;

(*b*) Landowners ;

(*c*) The town electors (only in certain governments) ;

(*d*) The artisans (only in six governments).

And as each government is entitled to return a certain number of members fixed by the law,* the requisite number is completed by electing members from the remaining total of electors.

There are two exceptions to the general pro-

* The number varies from three to twelve.

cedure: the largest cities, and Siberia, Poland, and the Caucasus (where the procedure is somewhat different). The larger cities—St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and Riga—vote according to property qualification, and elect members directly to the Duma.

The result of this complicated system of suffrage is that the landed interest and the wealthier classes are predominant in the Duma, and consequently the Conservative element is the strongest.

The Radical, Social Democratic, and Labour element which exists in the Duma is furnished by the big towns, with their direct elective system, and the election of members representing the peasant class, which is always guaranteed—and the artisan class, which is to some extent guaranteed—by the elective assemblies of every government.

All that I have written so far concerns the instruments of legislation. The administration of the country, the actual business of government, is carried out by the Senate, the Council of Ministers, the governors of the provinces, the Zemstvos (county councils), and, as far as religious affairs are concerned, by the Holy Synod.

The highest administrative institution of the State is the Senate. The Ruling Senate was founded by Peter the Great in 1711, with the object of representing him and acting on his behalf during his frequent absences. Its functions, which are essentially the same to-day as they were then, only on a larger scale, consist in supervising all branches of administration and in seeing that the laws are carried out throughout the country. The Ruling Senate, at the same time, is the high court of justice for the empire, the highest court of appeal in administrative matters, and exercises supreme control; it promulgates all laws, and supervises the courts of law.

The Senate has several sub-departments, which have various functions, the most important of which is that of checking the executive power, and seeing that it is exercised in accordance with the law. The department to which this function belongs is also charged with the promulgation of a law, and may refuse to promulgate it if the law is contrary to the fundamental laws. A procurator, representing the Crown, is attached to every department of the Senate, who is subordinate to the Minister of Justice. The latter,

in this connection, is called the Procurator-General.

The Senate also examines complaints brought against Ministers, governors, or provincial and district officials. The senators are appointed by the Emperor.

The Council of Ministers consists of the Ministers and heads of administration.

There are twelve Ministries: Foreign Affairs, War, Admiralty, Finance, Education, Ways and Communications, Agriculture, Justice, Commerce and Industry, the Imperial Court, the Interior, and the Department of Government Control.

Each individual Minister is bound to bring before the Council all Bills that are destined to come before the Duma and the Council of Empire; all proposals concerning changes in the staff in the chief offices of higher and local administration; and all reports which have been drawn up for presentation to the Sovereign.*

Russia is divided for purposes of administration into provinces called governments. Peter the

* Besides the Council of Ministers, there are various other deliberative institutions, such as a Military Council, an Admiralty Council, an Imperial Defence Council, a Financial Committee, and a Court of Chancery.

Great was the first Russian ruler to make such a division. He divided the country into eight governments. Catherine II. increased the number to 40. At the present day there are 78 governments—49 in European Russia, 10 in Poland, 8 in Finland, 7 in the Caucasus, 4 in Siberia.

There are besides these governments, twenty-three provinces which are called territories (*oblasti*), which are either incompletely organized or retain special institutions. They are for the greater part situated at the extremes of the empire. The average size of a government is greater than Belgium, Holland, or Switzerland. The divisions were made artificially and arbitrarily, and the governments in this respect resemble the French departments.

The governments are divided into districts, which correspond to the French *arrondissements*. Each province has from eight to fifteen districts, and is parcelled out for administrative and judicial purposes, according to its size, between a certain number of officials called *zemskie nachalniki*, called by some English writers land captains. These *zemskie nachal-*

niki were created in 1889* to replace the local justices of peace, who were abolished in that year. They were a kind of official squire. The office could in principle only be held by a member of the hereditary nobility. They exercise executive and judicial authority over the villages in their area of jurisdiction. I will discuss their judicial authority later in the chapter on justice. They have the character of police officers in that they make bye-laws, and that of magistrates in that they decide on their infringement. They are nominated by the governor, and appointed by the Minister of the Interior. They have the control of the peasants' communal institutions. All resolutions of the village assemblies and findings of the canton courts are submitted to them. All the officials of the peasants' administration are subordinate to them. They have now become, more or less, officials of the Ministry, and are no longer men of weight or position among the nobility. The total number of these *zemskie nachalniki* in every district

* By a recent law which came into force in January 1914 the *zemskie nachalniki* are being abolished in certain portions of Russia and replaced by elective Justices of Peace.

form a Board which sits in the district town once or more every month, as necessity arises. This board is presided over by the marshal of the nobility of the district, and with the co-operation of a police official called the *Ispravnik*, who has charge of the police duties of every district, and of other officials, constitutes an administrative unit which corresponds to a French *sous-préfet*.

At the head of every province is a governor, who is proposed by the Minister of the Interior, and appointed by the emperor. He is responsible for the administration of the government. His office is not unlike that of the intendant of the old *régime* in France, and the préfet of modern France. Formerly the governor concentrated all the administrative powers in himself, and every province was a miniature autocracy. The governor is assisted by a board of Administration, over which he presides, and which consists of a vice-governor, councillors, the government medical officer, the government engineer, the architect, the land surveyor, and their deputies.

The governor can issue special regulations for safeguarding public order; he exercises control

over all the administrative offices and institutions, all officials and public servants, and the institutions of local government. All regulations passed by the county or district councils, or the town corporations, must be confirmed by him; and likewise the election of all officials elected and appointed by the local self-governing bodies.

The principal check on the apparently unlimited powers of the central administration, personified in the various governors, lies in the rights exercised by the Assembly of Nobles.

The nobility in every district meet once every three years and elect a president for their district, who is called the marshal of the nobility of the district.

After this is done, all the nobility of all the districts in the province unite to elect a president for the province. He is called the marshal of the nobility of the province. The election of the marshal of the district must be confirmed by the governor; that of the marshal of the province is confirmed by the Emperor in person, and by the Emperor alone.

In order to belong to the Assembly of Nobles, it is necessary, besides being a noble by birth,

to own land in the district or the province; to possess either a military or civil *tchin*; or in default of this sign of rank, certificates testifying that you have passed certain examinations.

The right to assemble and elect marshals for the districts and the province (and a board of trustees for the orphans of nobles) is all that remains now of the larger privileges conferred on the nobility by Catherine II. Those privileges consisted in the right of appointing the local judges and the chief local officials—that is to say, the county police. This prerogative lasted until the epoch of the great reforms in the 'sixties.

But in spite of the loss of their former privileges, the nobility, as represented in the marshals of the districts, still discharges manifold duties of an intricate character, and by so doing forms the corner-stone of local administration, and consequently constitutes a certain check on the otherwise uncontrolled action of the governor of the province.

As far as administration is concerned, the marshal of the province is less important than the marshal of the district. He is an *ex officio* member of the governor's board of administra-

tion, and as such, both by tradition and by right, he exercises considerable influence, since an independent influential personality is certain to be elected to the post.

On the other hand, the duties and powers of the marshal of the district are more numerous, and stand in closer touch with the machinery of provincial administration. He is the president of all the executive committees in the district: all committees that deal with the settlement of questions relating to the peasants' land, military conscription, and the supervision of local schools. He is the president of the district tribunal (the court of petty sessions), and as such the chief justice of peace of the district. He is, moreover, the *ex officio* president of the Zemstvo Assembly.

The marshal of the district has duties and capacities of a dual nature. On the one hand he performs representative duties resembling those of a lord-lieutenant of an English county; and on the other hand, in conjunction with the board of *zemskie nachalniki* I mentioned just now, he fills the place of a French *sous-préfet*. But the important fact about his

position is that he is outside and not inside the central official administration. His position is inviolable because once he is elected he is irremovable, save by imperial ukase, except in the case of his falling under sentence for breaking the law.

The strength of his position lies less in his executive power than in the fact that he is an independent unit, acting in the machinery of administration, but outside bureaucratic control, and consequently a check on the local central administration. He receives no salary, and is necessarily a man of social position.

Lately, owing to the reactionary tendency towards centralization which followed the revolutionary movement in Russia, and which has not yet abated, the influence of the district marshal has been, to a certain extent, impaired, owing to the greater influence exercised by the police, who make capital, and lead the central administration to make capital, out of the fear of revolution.

Besides the Assembly of Nobles there is a further check on the action of the provincial governor in the office of the procurator. This office is attached to the divisional courts of justice. And the procurator, besides acting

as public prosecutor and exercising general control over law courts, has to see that the law is executed. If a governor acts illegally, the procurator has the right to appeal to the Senate, which we have already seen fulfils the special duty of examining such complaints.

Side by side with the Assemblies of the Nobles there exist assemblies of representatives of different classes.

For the purpose of local self-government European Russia is divided into village communes, and into groups of communes which form an administrative unit, called the Canton (*Volost*). The Canton varies in size, and can include as many as thirty villages. Both the Commune and the Canton are self-governing. The village is governed by the Commune—that is to say, the village assembly—which manages the property of the village and divides it among its members, exercises disciplinary rights, and has the control of leases of land made to outsiders. But both as regards the affairs of the Commune and the Canton, the peasants are, as a class, isolated. The Commune and the Canton can only levy taxes on their own members.

The Canton has an assembly also. Each Commune sends one man from every ten households to the Assembly of the Canton, which elects a president called the Elder, and five judges chosen from the peasants to serve on the court of the Canton.

The provincial administration is, to some extent, entrusted to elective District and Provincial Assemblies called Zemstvos.

The Zemstvo was created in 1864. The word *Zemstvo* means territorial assembly; the institution corresponds to our county council. There are two kinds of Zemstvo, the smaller being elected to deal with the affairs of a single district; the larger is selected by the Zemstvos of all the districts, and forms a county council for the whole province to deal with the affairs common to all the districts in that province.

Both the assemblies must be summoned at least once a year. (They sit for about a fortnight.)

The District Zemstvo Assembly is elected indirectly, and consists on an average of about forty members. The elections of the District Zemstvo are organized according to class division, or rather civic status. Each class elects so

many representatives—the peasants so many, the nobility so many, the town dwellers so many. The number of the representatives of each class is fixed by law in such way as to give the representatives of the nobility the preponderance. Thus about half (or more than half) the members consists of members of the nobility; the remainder are peasants, and include three or four merchants from the towns. All members are elected for a term of three years.*

The Provincial Zemstvo consists chiefly of members of the nobility, elected from the District Assemblies.†

* The peasants of each Canton elect a candidate, and the elected candidates in their turn elect from amongst themselves the number of members required. The nobility, the merchants, and any peasants who are outside the Commune—that is to say, private landowners—are elected by property qualification; they have to possess so many acres, or so much immovable property, or a commercial or industrial establishment of a certain assessed value. People who own not less than one-tenth of the necessary property qualification, also persons who are less than twenty-five years of age, and women, may take part in the election by proxy.

† The Government or Provincial Zemstvo Assembly is composed of a certain number of members, fixed by the law, elected by the District Assemblies:—

Of all the marshals of the nobility;
Of all the presidents of the districts;
Of the chairman and members of the government council;
Of representatives of the clergy;
Of the heads of the local branches of the Department of Agriculture.

Both the assemblies elect from amongst themselves a standing committee (*zemskaya uprava*) of four or five paid officials, which is appointed for three or four years. These standing committees do practically all the current work of the district.

The governor of the province has the right to confirm or to refuse to confirm the election of the presidents and members of the Zemstvo Assemblies; to institute legal proceedings against them; to exercise a veto on all resolutions of both bodies. The assemblies have the right of appeal to the Senate.

The nature of self-government in the towns, and the control exercised over it is practically the same as that of the Zemstvo institutions. (The property qualification for the elector is high.)

The importance of the Zemstvo institutions lies in the fact that they minister to the practical needs of the community. Within their scope are the ways and communications, the roads, and the Zemstvo post, all medical and charitable institutions, mutual insurance, prevention of cattle disease, fire brigades, primary education, and the development of agriculture and trade.

The practical weakness of the Zemstvo as an institution is that it possesses no lower elective unit corresponding to a vestry or a parish; no boards below those of the district, which execute its decisions.

The resources of the Zemstvo consist in taxes, which are levied by the District and Provincial Zemstvo on land, whether owned by the peasants, the nobility, or the Crown.

The main characteristic of the Provincial Zemstvo (since it was remodelled in 1890, before which date it was more democratic) is that it is extremely reactionary. But the Zemstvo consists, as I have already said, chiefly of the nobility—that is to say, of members of the more cultivated classes—and the result of this is, that in spite of its members being reactionary in views and sentiment, the work done by assemblies of these reactionary members is, except in times of violent reaction, such as the period immediately following after the revolutionary movement, of a progressive nature.

In looking back on the work that the Zemstvo has accomplished during the last fifty years, one sees clearly that the action of the Zemstvo has

been purely progressive, and the work done has outstripped in liberalism the views and the opinions of the nobility taken as a class, which constitute its most important ingredient. This explains the mistrust which the central administration entertains towards the Zemstvo—even towards its reactionary members. The representatives of the central administration, by exercising their right of confirming or cancelling elections and resolutions, are for ever trying to hinder and hamper the work of the Zemstvo, and to acquire greater control over it.

In a matter such as the Zemstvo it must by no means be assumed that the various Ministries in St. Petersburg are necessarily at one. On the contrary, they may be, and they often are, at sixes and sevens. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture is really (and ever since it has existed always has been) progressive; and since it wishes to get things done, works with the Zemstvo; and so does the Ministry of Finance, as far as it is concerned with the Zemstvo. This guarantees a certain counter influence to that of the Ministry of the Interior, which carries on the traditional policy of its department, of regarding the Zemstvo as an enemy.

If we look now at the work which is being accomplished by the Zemstvo in the various branches which come under its scope, we see a considerable improvement in medical institutions and in all that regards public health; a vast improvement in primary education, the progress being lately so great that there has been a demand for supplementary funds for education; and quite lately agriculture has taken a sharp bound forward, and in so doing has received considerable assistance from the State.

Taking the Zemstvo and its work as a whole, as a factor in Russian life and administration, it is clear that it is the one real and vital political force in Russia, in spite of the reactionary tendencies of the majority of its members, and in spite of an important organic weakness in its constitution, which I have already mentioned —namely, the absence of a link between the Zemstvo and the people it represents.

It is near to practical life, and it is nearer to the population than any other institution or body, and since it possesses, in its limited way, wider facilities for the public discussion of vital

interests than any other institutions, it has during the last fifty years proved the real organ of public opinion, and the real lever in the matter of progress, for it was the Zemstvo which voiced the universal desire for reform in 1905, and contributed in no small way to the changes which were then made.

All that is here set down, when you read it through, sounds, as far as the Zemstvo is concerned, as if all were for the best in the best of all possible worlds; but in practice the work of the Zemstvo is hampered by the power of the officials appointed by the Central Government, and the power of these officials is not only used arbitrarily, but sometimes in a manner definitely contrary to the law. For the governor of the province, if he cannot absolutely put a stop to the work of the Zemstvo, can hamper it in every possible way, and put effectual spokes in its wheels. It is not only that the possibility of his so doing exists, but the fact is being actually and not seldom experienced at the present time, owing to the low administrative standard of the governors who are appointed.

It is worth mentioning also that in the im-

portant outlying districts of Russia—in Poland, the Baltic provinces and the Caucasus—there is no Zemstvo, and all the duties of the Zemstvo are carried out by a committee of officials, and the majority of these do their work extremely badly. Also, in these regions the nobility have no rights.

If you review the Government machine which administrates Russia as a whole, the same criticism applies. On paper the fundamental laws of the empire, the rights of the two Houses and of the Senate, and of the instruments of local self-government, together with the numerous checks and safeguards against official lawlessness, seem to provide a very fine working constitution. In practice the rights are often over-ruled, and the checks disregarded.

The Duma, by its very existence, of course, is an element of progress, however indirect; but here again the Government, owing to the nature of the electoral law, can exert pressure on the elections, and have so far succeeded in always obtaining a reactionary majority, so that the actual composition of the Duma is not what it would be if the Government exerted no pressure at all.

Again, since any form or shade of constitutional government is a new feature in Russia, in many cases that arise there is no established precedent which can be referred to, and the course to be taken is doubtful, but in such cases the benefit of this doubt accrues to the Government.

In spite of this there is not the slightest doubt that in Russia at present the existence and the action of the Duma are felt, indirectly, very widely indeed. And as a rule people who are in the thick of Russian affairs, the Russians themselves, will not realize this so well as an outsider.

The existence of the Duma has proved a factor in national progress. And the outsider, who has had any experience of Russian life in the past, will at once see that the progress in the general state of affairs from what existed ten years ago to what exists now has been immense. There is a great gulf between the period before 1905 and the era which began in 1905. The trouble is that the government and the administration have not kept step and time with the national progress. And when people say in exculpation of the faults of any

given government, that every country has the government which it deserves, it may safely be said that the actual government of Russia is less good than what Russia deserves, since it is impossible to deny that, in some respects, Russia is comparatively, relatively, and taking the general state of affairs and of national progress into consideration, less well governed at present—as is the case probably with England and most other European countries—than it was not only in the immediate past, but even in the days of Alexander II. Hence there exists an increasing political discontent, into the specific causes of which we will inquire in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

CAUSES OF DISCONTENT.

I HAVE already said in the preceding chapter that the principles of central and parliamentary government in Russia, and the theory of local administration and local self-government, if investigated on paper, produce an excellent impression, so that the casual inquirer, glancing at the subject for the first time, will be tempted to exclaim, "What more can the Russian people want?"

Moreover, there has perhaps never been a period when Russia was more materially prosperous than at the present moment, or when the great majority of the people seemed to have so little obvious cause for discontent; and yet—it would be futile to deny it—unmistakable signs of discontent exist.

Seeds of discontent have been sown, and are

every day being sown broadcast, and unless their early shoots are uprooted in time, it is difficult to imagine that they will not bear momentous fruit in the future, however distant such a future may be.

Whereupon the casual inquirer would probably ask a further question: "If the Russian people are discontented, why are they discontented? What are these seeds of discontent? Whence do they come? And are their grievances substantial or frivolous, real or imaginary?"

The answer is, I think, simple.

The seeds of discontent, where they exist, are the result of one simple fact. In 1905 explicit promises were made to the Russian people, which, if carried out, would insure their complete political liberty and the full rights of citizenship. Those promises have in some cases not been carried out at all, and in other cases they have only been carried out partially, or according to the letter and not according to the spirit.

Practically, political liberty does not yet exist in Russia, and the rights of political citizenship are still a vain dream.

Every now and then the spokesmen of the

Government inform us that the Russian people are quite indifferent as to legislative reform, and that all they care for is competent administration. I think, however, putting aside altogether the question whether competent administration can be obtained without legislative reform, that nobody will deny that some people in Russia want political liberty. It would be equally difficult to deny that the absence of political liberty indirectly hampers and annoys and exasperates a still greater number of people, who take no interest in politics and who foster no political theories of any kind.

Hence discontent arises, which will necessarily vary and increase in proportion as such annoyance and exasperation is felt by a greater or lesser number of people.

In the years that followed immediately on the publishing of the Manifesto in 1905, the policy of the Government during the administration of P. A. Stolypin was: "Order first; Reform afterwards." To P. A. Stolypin fell the ungrateful task of restoring order. He accomplished his task, successfully if drastically. And it is only fair to say that it would have probably

been impossible to restore order save by drastic measures. It must also be said in fairness that P. A. Stolypin initiated certain large measures which tend towards reform—his Land Bill and his Education Bill, for instance. But the reforms initiated during his administration, and during that of his successor, have as yet only been partial; and so far the practical policy of the Government has consisted in taking away, curtailing, and limiting with one hand what has been given with the other.

This is partly due to the constant introduction of qualifying clauses and amendments in any new laws that are liberal in spirit—amendments which have the effect of hindering the practical operation of the laws; and partly to the quality of the local administration, whose duty it is to interpret and to execute the laws. As a general rule, the local administrative officials, by the manner of their interpretation, are completely successful in sacrificing the spirit to the letter of the law, and of depriving the laws of their true meaning, and of rendering them null and void in practice.

Such a policy must inevitably have an exasperating effect on the population.

Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

The Manifesto of October 30 promised, firstly, the creation of a deliberative and legislative assembly without whose consent no new laws in the future should be passed; and secondly, the full rights of citizenship—namely, the inviolability of the person, freedom of conscience, freedom of the Press, the right of organizing public meetings, and of founding unions and associations.

How far and in what manner have these promises been fulfilled? How far are these things a practical factor in Russian political life to-day?

Let us take the Duma first.

We have already seen that the Duma possesses a considerable indirect influence, and that by its very existence, and quite apart from what it may effect or fail to effect legislatively, a change has come about in the government of Russia; but in spite of this, the powers, or rather the power, of the Duma is to a certain extent paralyzed by the attitude of the Central Government towards it.

The attitude of the Government towards the Duma is a curious one. Firstly, by its interpretation of the law, by the addition of qualifying clauses and amendments, the Government tries,

whenever it can, to diminish the powers that have been granted to the Duma, and more especially in so far as they concern the Budget; and secondly, the Government floods the Duma with a great quantity of irrelevant and trivial legislation with the object of keeping the more vital and important issues out of its reach.

This is one reason why any prevailing discontent is prevented from subsiding, since by acting in this manner the Government never ceases to fan the smouldering ashes of discontent into flame, and to feed the flame with slender but continuous supplies of fresh fuel.

So far, then, we have already one cause of discontent—the attitude of the Government towards the Duma; and this attitude consists, in a word, of doing everything it can to prevent the Duma from becoming a reality—a vital factor in the State—and in trying to convert it into a passive annex to the Government machine.

The second question now arises. What has been, and what is, the attitude of the Central Government towards the remaining promises made by the Manifesto of October 30th? I will take the promises separately; but before

doing so, it will be as well to point out that, at present, all matters which are affected by the promises laid down in the Manifesto of 1905 are being carried out by temporary regulations, instead of by laws passed through the Duma. It is clear that temporary regulations lend themselves easily to amendment, and amendments signify a deviation from the original intention of such regulations. Moreover, all temporary regulations are interpreted by the local officials, whose powers of interpretation are necessarily arbitrary, and whose powers of evasion, explanation, and general tergiversation are incredibly ingenious, and are almost invariably employed in the interests of reaction. I will now take the various points in order.

(1.) *The Inviolability of the Person.*—With regard to this question, practically nothing has been done. A Bill on the subject was introduced by the Government during the third session of the last Duma, but was rejected by the Duma because it did not affect the root of the question. Another Bill was introduced later, but has not yet emerged into the region of fact. The laws of the country on this point

are brief and explicit. They guarantee to the subject a slightly protracted form of *habeas corpus*, and are summed up in twelve short clauses; but if you buy the book containing these twelve short clauses, you find they are followed by a whole volume of amendments, explanations, and rules relating to exceptional circumstances. Practically, these exceptions deal for the greater part with so-called political offences; but owing to the ramifications of these manifold amendments, both the central and the local authorities can enlarge their conception of what constitutes a political offence to almost any extent. The interpretation becomes infinitely elastic; and thus it is easy for people who have no more to do with politics than the man in the moon to fall under the suspicion of a political offence, and the life of everyday people is reached and touched by the ramifications of exceptional clauses made to a clear law, which was originally passed in order to deal with cases germane to one exceptional matter, and which could only therefore affect a small minority.

Again, all the ordinary laws of the country can be suspended and overruled by the putting into force of temporary regulations, which are

introduced by the authorities as administrative measures in districts which are, or are supposed to be, disturbed.

These temporary measures are in reality minor forms and shades of martial law. They consist of what are called the state of "Reinforced Protection," and the state of "Extraordinary Protection."

Both these exception "states" may be proclaimed by the Ministry of the Interior, after a resolution of the Cabinet Council, which must be confirmed by the Emperor.

Under the state of "Reinforced Protection," governors-general, governors, and city prefects have the right of inflicting punishment for the infringement of any rules they may issue by a fine not exceeding 500 roubles (£50), or by a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, without trial. They have also, among other things, the right of prohibiting public or private meetings, of shutting commercial establishments, of prohibiting the residence of any person in a given district.

Under the state of "Extraordinary Protection" their powers are enlarged. For instance, a special police can be created, and certain

offences can be removed from the jurisdiction of ordinary courts of law and can be tried by courts-martial; newspapers and periodicals can be suspended, and schools can be closed for a period not exceeding one month. The state of "Reinforced Protection" is still in force at this moment in many parts of Russia, and although one reads from time to time in the newspaper that it has been removed from such and such a place, it often happens that it is merely the name which has been abolished. The governor will often continue to exercise rights which are supposed to apply solely to exceptional circumstances.

Further, these "States of Protection" are often left in force in places where there is not, and has not been for a reasonable time, a shadow of disturbance.

(2.) *Freedom of Conscience.*—A law whose sole object was religious tolerance was passed a few years ago. Theoretically freedom of conscience is supposed to exist. Practically, it exists only very partially. If there are fifty members of any religious denomination in any place in Russia, they are supposed to be allowed to build a church, where they can worship as they

please. But there is a clause in this law forbidding propaganda; and lately the interpretation of this clause has become more and more elastic, and in virtue of it technical objections are raised showing that Catholic or Uniate, or other unorthodox societies, are not in order, and their churches are consequently closed. Sometimes technical objections of another nature are found to meet the case. A case in point is that of the Catholic Uniates who were allowed by P. A. Stolypin to have a church in St. Petersburg. That church has now been closed by the Minister of the Interior, Maklakov, on the grounds that the church building does not fulfil the technical conditions obligatory to buildings where public meetings are held. Nothing could be more typical. The tendency during the last three years has been to take away by means of technical objections, or under the pretence of having discovered traces of propaganda, the larger liberties that were given. And this again irritates all those whom it may concern. As soon as any religious sect is suspected of opening rivalry to the Orthodox Church, some means or other is immediately found for

prohibiting it. The Salvation Army are not allowed in Russia. Such things being the case, it would be absurd to say that liberty of conscience exists in Russia; on the other hand, it exists in larger measure than it used to.

(3.) *Freedom of the Press.*—Broadly speaking, the Press is free in Russia at present, and this is perhaps the greatest asset which resulted from the revolutionary movement. Before 1905, there existed what in practice, although not in theory, was called "Previous Censure"—that is to say, representatives of the censorship used to visit the newspaper offices and censor the newspapers at their own sweet will. At present people can write what they choose in the newspapers, but the administration has the right to inflict a fine not exceeding 500 roubles (£50) on a newspaper (*a*) for publishing false news concerning the Government; and (*b*) for inciting the populace to rise against the Government; and in the case of "Extraordinary Protection," newspapers, as we have seen, can be stopped altogether.

The effect of this regulation is felt far more in the provinces than in the large cities, for it stands to reason that a small newspaper with a

narrow circulation will be more sensitive to such a fine than a large newspaper with an enormous circulation, to which it will be no more than a flea-bite. Moreover, the regulation is applied more often and more indiscriminately in the provinces than in the large cities.

For instance, the Moscow newspaper, the *Russkoe Slovo*, which I believe has the largest circulation of any Russian newspaper, published on November 7, 1913, the following schedule of the fines imposed on newspapers for comments on the Beiliss trial up to date :—

October 24 (November 7, N.S.).

Pamphlets confiscated	1
Newspapers fined	1

Total fines, 200 roubles (about £20).

Total for 30 days of the Beiliss Case.

Editors arrested	6
Editors summoned	6
Newspapers confiscated	27
Pamphlets confiscated	6
Newspapers closed	3
Newspapers fined	42

Total of fines (up to date) 12,750 roubles (about £1,275).

A similar schedule, with its daily total of fines, appeared every day during the ritual murder trial.

It will be seen that the fines, when added up, do not amount to a very considerable sum, but a succession of such fines, not large in themselves, can end by doing damage to a small provincial paper. In any case they exercise an irritating effect.

Here again the question of interpretation plays an important part.

Almost anything can be interpreted as coming under the head of "false news concerning the Government," and it is often easy to catch a newspaper out of a technical inaccuracy, although the statement made may in its substance be true.

For instance, if in a schedule such as that I have quoted it were stated that the editor of such and such a provincial newspaper had been arrested, and supposing the fact were true; but supposing also he had been subsequently released, and the news of his release had not reached the newspaper which published the news of his arrest, the newspaper would be fined for

spreading false news with regard to the action of the Government.

Supposing, again, a regulation in a provincial district had been infringed by an official, and the news of the infringement were published in a newspaper; if the newspaper made a mistake with regard to the exact rank of the official in question, it would be fined for spreading false news.

Newspapers that copy news from other newspapers which come under the ban of "false news" are likewise liable to be fined.

This state of things, although it leaves the richer newspapers indifferent, exasperates the great mass of the journalistic world beyond measure.

(4.) *The right of holding Public Meetings.*—Public meetings are allowed, theoretically, under certain conditions. In the first place, in order to hold a meeting you must apply for permission to the local governor, and state the object of the meeting. If the local governor refuses, you must give up the idea.

Secondly, a member of the police must be present at any meeting, who shall have the right

of putting a stop to the proceedings if he thinks the speakers are showing signs of an anti-governmental tendency.

The police have in the last few years continually enlarged their conception of what can be considered anti-governmental, so much so that they often go to a meeting with the sole purpose of stopping it, and seize the first pretext of so doing, especially if it is a meeting of working men. The net result of the policy is that public meetings are rare, even at election times. Even the programmes of concerts must be sanctioned by the police.

(5.) *Associations and Societies.*—These had a brief and flourishing existence immediately after the publication of the Manifesto, during the administration of Count Witte and the session of the first Duma; since then they have practically ceased to exist. They are entirely subject to Government control, and have been controlled out of all existence.

These five clauses which I have just analyzed, if they were carried out in practice, would confer on the Russian citizen complete rights of citizenship—in a word, political liberty. As it is,

they are either not carried out at all, or in so far as they are carried out they operate in virtue of temporary regulations which are (*a*) liable to constant amendment; (*b*) at the mercy of the interpretation of local officials.

So, if the attitude of the Government towards the Duma is one great cause of discontent, the nature and the tendency of local administration is another.

The local administration is bad in itself, and has the effect of exasperating the people.

One of the reasons why this is so, is the necessity which the local officials feel themselves to be under of keeping up their prestige, and the prestige of the Central Government. The result of the policy of "Order first; Reform afterwards," as it filtered through the various branches of administration throughout the country, is that the greatest crime in the eyes of the administration is criticism—criticism of any kind—because the slightest breath of criticism is held to be subversive and detrimental to the prestige of Government; and in the eyes of the officials, the Government must be upheld at all costs.

In the country, in the provinces and districts, at the present day in Russia, the illegality practised by Government officials is more flagrant than it was before 1905, because before 1905 illegality came from above, and from above only, and the local Government officials did not dare to infringe their obligations, but now the illegality is decentralized, and disseminated throughout the complicated network of administration. And since any kind of criticism is looked upon as a crime, those who are guilty of it, or are suspected of being guilty of it, are liable to meet with every kind of small restriction, check, and annoyance, and hence the life of the people is interfered with, and discontent is engendered.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the part played by the secret police.

We have said that criticism is regarded as a crime, and as an attack on the prestige of Government, but the reason of this is that criticism of governmental methods or officials is regarded as being synonymous with sympathy with the revolutionaries, and the ideas of the extreme parties, and this wide definition of criticism

includes religious propaganda, the spreading of false news, and all anti-governmental speech or action. All these things are regarded as denoting sympathy with revolution, and revolution in its extreme form.

This is the view of the administration as a whole, and the view is strongly reflected in the action of the secret police, which exists all over the country; and the business of the secret police is, if not to spread discontent, to make it appear far more formidable than it is; to make it appear active where in reality it is only passive, otherwise there would be no reason why a large part of the secret police should exist at all.

In order to check and keep an eye on the revolutionary movement, whose existence the administration suspects everywhere, a wholesale system of espionage, of secret reports, of private denunciation, exists. The administration employs a quantity of people who are paid to "sneak" of what is going on in various quarters. Now the step from the office of spy to that of *agent provocateur* is an easy one. It is obvious that a spy who wishes for further information about people who are thought to be revolution-

aries will obtain that information more easily if he pretends to be a revolutionary himself. So the spy easily degenerates into the *agent provocateur*, and the people, knowing that spies and *agents provocateurs* exist in their midst, feel they are never safe. And this feeling that you are never safe, whoever you are, or wherever you are (for a report may be at any moment being concocted about you, in the very *milieu* where you live), gives a constantly increasing stimulus to discontent. It is not so much the things that happen, but the feeling that something may happen, that nobody is safe, which prevents discontent from dying out. Here, as in other respects, the life of the people is interfered with, and the people are exasperated.

All that I have written so far applies to Russia proper, but it is applicable in a higher degree to the Ukraines, to Poland, the Caucasus, the Baltic provinces, and to Finland.

In these provinces the arbitrary nature of local administration and the illegality practised by Government officials is felt more strongly still than in Russia. Consequently, in all these

outlying dominions, there prevails a greater or a lesser degree of discontent. And this discontent is further increased by the policy of the Central Government towards these dominions; for the Government *vis-à-vis* of the Duma makes capital out of the question of these different nationalities, and places in the foreground questions of legislation which concern them. They are used as a political weapon, as a spring-board for nationalist theory and practice, and as a means for shelving measures of reform, which deal with Russia proper. This not only exasperates these various nationalities to a high degree, but it also exasperates those Russians who wish to see the reforms that were promised realized in their own country.

Finally, the question arises, "Why is this so?" What prevents Russia from being quietly governed according to the comprehensive laws that already exist in its code, and according to the admirable and perspicuous principles of its political constitution? and further, what prevents the Government from fulfilling those promises made, which are as yet unfulfilled, and from putting into practice reforms which

the majority of thinking people in Russia agree are indispensable ?

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to give a satisfactory and categorical answer to these questions.

Political Liberals in Russia would probably answer that the old *régime* which was scotched but not killed in 1905 is gradually recovering strength, and is simply fighting for its existence : that it is a case of self-preservation. On the other hand, there are Independent Conservatives and Independent Radicals who would tell you that what is needful in Russia is a strong executive, a drastic and courageous dictator, who would be strong enough to hew down the impediments, and cart away the rubbish, and govern Russia according to its ancient traditions ; that this is the only form of government which has ever been successful in Russia, but that no such man of action is forthcoming at present. Others, more sceptically inclined, would probably remind you that every country has the government it deserves ; and that if political liberty in Russia does not exist, it is owing to the fundamental tendency of the Russian character towards indis-

cipline, and that since every Russian is more or less undisciplined, it is impossible for them to expect that their Government will be anything but arbitrary.

One thing is certain, the drawbacks, the restraint, the impediments, the danger of criticism, the checks on free speech, on free worship, and other forms of freedom, to which I have alluded, naturally touch the educated part of the population more nearly than they do the great mass—the majority, the peasants—who at this moment are better off economically than they have ever been before; and consequently, even if they are discontented, it stands to reason that in the present circumstances it would need a powerful stimulus to increase their discontent to breaking point.

And what is true about the peasants is true, to a certain extent, about the remainder of the population.

The population on the whole are prosperous at the present moment, and their grievances are neither sharp nor strong enough, nor sufficiently abundant, to make the temperature of their discontent rise to boiling point. When the

discontent which now exists becomes sufficiently widely and deeply felt to stir the average man to sympathy with action, and the abnormal man to violent action, then there may be an outbreak, unless it be anticipated by timely measures of reform, and the causes of discontent be removed.

At present nothing is being done by the Central Government or the local administration in this direction. At the present moment the local administration is making capital out of the fear of a revolution and a revolutionary movement, of whose existence there is little or no evidence, and infecting the central administration with this fear. Both the local and the central administration are constantly taking steps and issuing minor repressive measures to counteract a danger which, in the opinion of most people, exists only in the imagination of detectives; but if this policy continues, it is more than probable that the administrative powers will in time succeed in transforming the danger from an imaginary one into a real one, or rather, they will create the very danger they are afraid of; and the next revolution in Russia

will be the offspring of the fears of the administration—of a bogey.

The last revolutionary movement in Russia had a destructive and demoralizing effect on the population; it produced a wave of hooliganism among the lower classes, and a current of anarchical thought and conduct in the educated classes. It also had a demoralizing effect on the minor officials and public servants; but whereas in the great majority of the uneducated and educated public the balance of equilibrium was automatically restored, owing to the necessities of everyday life and a natural reaction towards common sense, this demoralization had a more lasting effect on the officials, who once having been used to meet exceptional circumstances and lawless acts by arbitrary means and illegal measures, found it difficult to divest themselves of the habit. And the lower the rung of the official ladder the more apparent the demoralization becomes.

Now, it is the small officials who are more intimately in touch with the population. Consequently the effect of their action is being continually felt, and the effect is bad. And until

something is done from above to remedy this state of things, the smouldering embers of discontent, as I have already said, will never have a chance of growing cold, and may ultimately burst out in a fire of alarming proportions.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AVERAGE RUSSIAN.

THE great danger in studying Russian life is to pay so much importance to the trees that the wood escapes notice. The temptation to do so where Russia is concerned is all the greater owing to the interest of individual trees; and by individual trees I mean not only individuals, but phases, tendencies, currents of thought, particular types, and political parties. Such types, or schools of thought, or political groups, although often of great interest in themselves, are rarely representative of the average tendency; and yet by foreigners it is often taken for granted that they are not only typical of the whole, but that nothing else beside them exists.

There was a time when Russia was supposed to consist entirely of Nihilists and policemen; at a later period social revolutionaries took the part

of Nihilists, and the *agent provocateur* played the chief part in the opposing camp, in the general view one obtained from the foreign press.

This general view was, of course, founded on fact. At one period Nihilists did exist, did conspire, and did blow up.

As for social revolutionaries, they existed in great quantities, and the *agents provocateurs*, too, became so numerous that it was scarcely worth while to be a social revolutionary. These groups are historically and psychologically worthy of careful study, but they were never representative of the average Russian, any more than the Fabians or the militant suffragettes are representative of the average Englishman and Englishwoman.

Then, again, you get the interesting types created by the masters of literature. You get Dostoievsky's neurasthenic murderer; Raskolnikov, his frigid and calculating political intriguer; Vervkhovensky, his undisciplined and centrifugal Dimitri Karamazov. You get Turgeniev's intellectual and uncompromising Bazarov; his enthusiastic sponger and *génie sans portefeuille*, Rudin; Tolstoi's Levin, Gorki's anarchical pro-

letarian. And all these characters are each of them more interesting than the other, and all of them reveal qualities that are Russian and nothing but Russian. But none of them is the average Russian, because the man of genius, when he creates a type such as *Lear* or *Faust*, is not endeavouring to portray the average man, but is making a synthesis of the human soul; so that every human being can see something of himself in the mirror of the poet's creation. But that creation is larger and wider than nature; and so far from being confined to the characteristics of the average man, contains within itself all the possibilities and capabilities and passions of the human soul—all the strings of the instrument, its whole gamut, its complete range of expression.

And the creations of a Russian novelist such as Dostoievsky afford us a synthesis of the Russian soul, in its profoundest depths, in its sorest spots, at its widest extremes, at its highest pitch of rapture or despair. The result is that they are no more portraits of the average Russian than *Lear* is a portrait of the average Englishman; and yet they are profoundly Rus-

sian, just as *Lear* is profoundly English, and *Faust* is profoundly German—although *Faust* is hardly a typical portrait of the ordinary German bourgeois.

One of the results which the genius of Russian novelists has had on foreign opinion is to create a general impression that Russia is a country of "inspissated gloom," because the greater number of the Russian novelists and poets deal with tragic themes, and their characters are painted in sombre colours.

There is nothing very strange about this. Happy individuals, like happy countries, have no history; and if you want to write drama, and especially tragic drama, the domestic affairs of *Œdipus Rex* or *Othello* obviously offer more fruitful material to the dramatist than the domestic affairs of Darby and Joan or of Philemon and Baucis. Even if the writer's aim is comedy, he will probably choose themes and material which give occasion for merciless satire or extravagant mirth, and create characters which on the comic side are as far above or below the average as those of the poets on the tragic side. *Falstaff* is just as extraordinary a character as

Hamlet, and *Sam Weller* is just as exceptional as Napoleon; yet *Sam Weller*, again, is profoundly English.

In Russia, just as in other countries, the cheerful side of life is reflected in literature, and the average man plays a part also—only that branch of Russian literature is less well known. Gogol, for instance, has created innumerable comic types; and Pushkin has, in his masterpiece, *Evgenie Oniegin*, drawn a masterly portrait of an average type, and more especially in Tatiana he has given us a lifelike portrait of the soul of the Russian woman, which is a radiant soul. But Gogol is less well known abroad than Turgeniev; and Pushkin's work being written in verse, suffers badly from inadequacy—or, rather, impossibility—of translation.

The net result is that the impression the outside reader obtains from such Russian literature as is available to him is that Russia is a gloomy country, and that the Russian people are steeped in a cloud of permanent melancholy. And yet the first thing that strikes you when you go to Russia is the cheerfulness* of the people and

* Cheerfulness, *not* gaiety.

the good humour of the average man. Not long ago, *apropos* of an article on Dostoievsky's *Idiot*, a well-known Russian artist wrote to *The Times*, saying that you might just as well judge the English people by *The City of Dreadful Night* as the Russian people by Dostoievsky's characters. The writer of the article explained, in answer, that he was not judging the Russian people at all, but only the faith of Dostoievsky. And although I think the writer's purpose was plain, and that he achieved it admirably, nevertheless the Russian artist's complaint, if it did not apply to the writer of that article, was a wholesome reminder to the public in general that the creations of Dostoievsky are creations of genius, and creations of tragic genius profoundly Russian, but dealing almost exclusively with the tragic adventures of the soul (which is, after all, the business of tragedy), and leaving out its sunnier experiences. As the Russian artist pointed out, there is another side to the medal of Russian life, and not only a bright side, but an unusually bright side —the *svietlaya duscha*, the radiant soul of which the Russian poet speaks, whose radiance, in my

opinion, is nowhere plainer than in Dostoievsky's novels, in spite of, and sometimes even because of, the encircling gloom.

It stands to reason that, if all Russians were as melancholy as they are depicted as being in many Russian novels and plays written by men of genius, the great majority of the Russian nation would have cut their throats a long time ago.

It is evident that there must be a great deal of cheerfulness, humour, and joy to counterbalance the gloom, the anguish, and the melancholy which is so vividly and so poignantly described by so many Russian authors, or else life would not go on.

This is just what is the case. The Russian goes easily to extremes: he is not, as a rule, fond of half measures; so that when he is melancholy, his melancholy takes an extreme form. He is fond of going the whole hog; and if he is inclined to neurasthenia and hysteria, he will give full scope to his fancy in that direction: he will be not uninclined to say with Baudelaire, "*J'ai cultivé mon hystérie avec jouissance et terreur.*"

But the average Russian is, perhaps, little more inclined to neurasthenia than the average Englishman. The average Russian is well-educated, cheerful, sociable, intensely gregarious, hospitable, talkative, expansive, good-humoured, and good-natured. You hear often in Russia the phrase *shirokaya natura* applied to the Russian temperament—a large nature. It means that the Russian temperament is generous, unstinted, democratic, and kind. Good-heartedness, and sometimes great-heartedness, is the great asset of the average Russian. He is the most tolerant of human beings. He is pre-eminently indulgent, and extends to the faults and failings of his neighbours the same indulgence which he knows his own faults and failings will receive at his neighbour's hands. His lack of hypocrisy, and the manner in which he will speak of his own shortcomings and deficiencies, will sometimes strike the foreigner as being the quintessence of cynicism.

One of the most contented Russians I ever met was a man who had got the post of assistant ticket-collector on a small railway line. His duty was to check the ticket collector. This man

had once upon a time been enormously rich. He had possessed estates, where he entertained his friends on a large scale, and provided them with every kind of amusement in the way of sport. Besides this, he had a private theatre of his own and a private orchestra. He spent all his money in this way, until there was none left, and he was obliged to accept what post he could get. But as an insignificant public servant on the railway line he was just as cheerful as ever; he said that he had just as much fun. "I used to drink champagne," he explained, "now I drink vodka; the result is the same in the long-run. I used to have a lot of money. I've spent it; money is meant to spend. What is the good of keeping or hoarding it? One can't take it with one when one dies."

This man had a *shirokaya natura*—a large and generous temperament. There was no trace of neurasthenia observable in his character. Stinginess is a quality which is rare in Russia. Thrift and economy are not among those virtues which are commonest there. On the other hand, broadness of mind and largeness of heart are virtues which are among the commonest.

After Count Tolstoy died a posthumous play of his was published, called *The Living Corpse*. The subject of the play was a story that happened in real life, taken straight from the newspaper, with the names and the *milieu* changed, and it struck me, when I read it and saw it acted, as being typical of Russian life—a story which could only happen in Russia. It is perhaps worth while retelling it here, as it throws more light on the subject than pages of argument.

The story is as follows. Liza Protasova leaves her husband Feodor, whom she had loved, because he is

> "A little slovenly in dress,
> A trifle prone to drunkenness."

Not a bad man, but weak, extravagant, and given to periodic outbreaks, when he spends the night listening to gipsies singing, and drinking champagne. You must know Russia to understand what listening to gipsies means, and you must be well inoculated with gipsy music before you understand the tyrannical spell of it. It is in a lesser degree like smoking opium.

Apart from these more or less venial failings,

Feodor, as I have said, is not a bad man, nor is he even an unfaithful husband. Nevertheless, his wife, after one of these periodic outbursts, leaves him and returns to her mother, who thoroughly approves of such a course. But no sooner has Liza taken this step than she repents herself of it, and she sends Feodor a message by one Karenin asking him to come back to her. Karenin is an honest prig and a bore. He is also in love with Liza. He executes the commission; but Feodor is listening to the gipsies, and especially to one of them called Masha, and he refuses to go back.

Weeks go by, and then months. Karenin loves Liza; Liza loves Karenin. Masha loves Feodor. Liza's mother wishes her daughter to be divorced and to marry Karenin. An embassy with this proposal is dispatched to Feodor. But according to the Russian law in such a case, in order to get a divorce when a wife has left her husband because she no longer wishes to be his wife, the husband must take the guilt on himself. He must declare himself a guilty, unfaithful husband; and if he is not one, he must concoct sham evidence to show that he is, and

swear to it. This Feodor refuses to do, because he is not guilty; he has not been unfaithful. He says, "I have been a bad husband, I am a worthless man; but there are things which I cannot do, and one of them is quietly to tell the necessary lies in order to make this divorce possible." He seeks another solution. He finds a simple one—suicide. But when the revolver is at his temple he hesitates, in an agony; and at that moment Masha the gipsy intervenes, sees what is happening, and suggests another solution—that he should let the world think he had killed himself, and in reality escape with her into the limbo of the disclassed, leaving his wife free to marry Karenin. He does this. He writes a letter to his wife, saying that he is about to kill himself; he leaves his clothes by the river. The plan succeeds; by chance a corpse is found. Liza says it is that of her husband (and it is no use saying that this is improbable, because it all happened). Feodor and Masha disappear, and Karenin marries Liza. All is for the best, for them.

Feodor sinks deeper into the mud; and one fine day, when he is telling his story to a friend

in a squalid tavern, he is overheard by a kind of tramp, who, quick to see the possible profit arising out of such a situation, suggests to Feodor a scheme of joint blackmail—that they should blackmail Liza. Feodor tells him to go to what I see now is prettily called "the underground world;" and the tramp, in a rage, calls a policeman and gives Feodor in charge for bigamy. But not only is Feodor had up for bigamy, but his wife and Karenin also: they are charged with conspiracy—if that be the right term—for having been privy to the scheme, and for having paid Feodor to get out of the way and to become a "living corpse." The maximum penalty of the law for bigamy is exile to Siberia; the minimum what is called "Church contrition." But in any case the second marriage is cancelled, and if Karenin, Feodor, and Liza were acquitted of conspiracy, Liza and Feodor would nevertheless be bound to resume their interrupted married life. The lawyers do not believe a word of the true story as it is told by the witnesses; and Feodor, to prevent Liza from being bound to him once more, commits suicide in the corridor of the law courts during

the trial. That is the story, and such are the facts—such as they actually happened in real life.

In this story Feodor, both in his faults and in his good qualities, is intensely typical of the Russian character.

This story illustrates the melancholy side of Russian life. To convince yourself of the cheerful side of the Russian character, you have only to look at any regiment of Russian soldiers marching through a street and singing as they march. It is the melancholy note of Russian music that is best known abroad. But cheerful songs and choruses exist in great abundance, and if you listen to the people in villages singing in the summer night, it is nearly always a cheerful song that you will hear to the accompaniment of the accordion; and often the songs are not only cheerful but irresistible in their lilt. The sense of rhythm of some of the village singers, and especially of the accompanists, whether they play the accordion or the three-stringed guitar, the *balalaika*, is sure, masterly, and astounding. The accompanist follows the singer with an infinite diversity in unity, and while

varying all the time, and introducing fantastic changes and daring improvisations, he never loses hold of the main trend of the subject, of the fundamental rhythm: he varies with invariable law.

Such music is infectious and captivating. It would inspire the lame to dance and the dead to walk. It is untiring. It seems to be able to go on and on for ever without pause or hesitation, and to reveal a fresh energy and to draw a new supply of strength with every new verse.

The average Russian is not only fond of music —he likes noise. Formerly in the restaurants there used to be large barrel organs or orchestrons. Now in the smarter restaurants there are bands of stringed instruments, and in the eating-houses of the poor, gramophones. Indeed, the popularity of gramophones in Russia is extraordinary. A love of gramophones is surely the sign of a cheerful temperament.

The amusement which the Russian is fondest of when he wants to have a really good time is to go and listen to gipsies. The entertainment is worth describing, as it is the unique property of Russia, and is the one thing you can almost

be sure the average Russian will understand, just as you will be sure the average Englishman will understand a sporting contest or a music-hall comic turn.

Looked at from the outside, as you see it, for instance, on the stage in Tolstoy's play, this is what you see. A private room in a restaurant. It is rather dingy. In the corner there is a battered piano, much the worse for wear. On the walls, looking-glasses. At one end of the room a plush sofa. In front of it a table, champagne bottles, and glasses.

The spectators sit on the sofa. In front of them, occupying the whole of the other side of the room, is the chorus of gipsies. The gipsies are not raggle-taggle people in shabby and gorgeous clothes. They are a chorus of men and women in ordinary dress, who, though swarthy in complexion, look like the audience in the upper circle at a Queen's Hall concert.

The gipsies show signs of the boredom and fatigue common to professionals engaged in the performance of their professional duties. They yawn. One of them has got a toothache and a swollen face. They carry on an undercurrent of

irrelevant conversation amongst themselves, while they automatically sing. The outsider will notice the mechanical side of the gaiety and the poetry they are paid to evoke. The candles on the table are guttering, and through the windows of the cheerless private room the cold dawn pierces, or the bright sun streams, as the case may be.

But those who are of the feast, and in it, notice none of these things. They are there for glamour, and they have got it. Oblivious of every sordid detail, and of all the mechanism, they are aware only of the poetry, the romance, and the passion evoked by a wailing concord of piercing, discordant sounds which play on the nerves like a bow upon strings.

The chorus sit in a semicircle, a man with a guitar stands up and leads the chorus, his guitar and his body swaying to the rhythm. A woman takes a solo part. The chorus rises into a wail as loud and as fierce as the howling of a pack of wolves, and then dies away in an unsatisfied sigh.

The first time you hear this monotonous and exasperating music you may think it disagreeable; but the moment you are bitten by the music and infected with it, the sensation is rather

like this: first you tremble all over as with a fever; then you are aware that the fever is pleasant. Then you forget all this: you are far away amid white dawns and sleepless midnights, and when you are brought back to reality, you demand—you insist on—one more glimpse of that sweet and bitter, that discordant and melodious, fairyland.

The gipsy music certainly has the quality of growing on you. It intoxicates some people. They are bitten by it to such an extent that they crave for it, as for a drug. They cannot do without it. Others are invincibly bored. But to the average Russian, to go and listen to gipsies, when you wish to enjoy yourself especially, is a common custom, and an expensive custom, so that, as a rule, people club together when they wish to treat themselves to this luxury.

The expense is part of the fun. If the average Russian wants to celebrate a feast of any kind he wishes to add to the festivity the spice of recklessness which the feeling that he is spending more than he can afford will give him. And if on such occasions he falls into the spending mood, he will spend recklessly.

He is generous, and, as a rule, careless about money. An enormous amount of borrowing is constantly going on. A asks B to lend him a hundred roubles. B complies at once, although he hasn't got it, and borrows it from C. Laxity in money matters, which is fairly common, is probably in some degree the result of the widespread administrative venality in the past, which was in its turn the inevitable fruit of long years of unchecked bureaucracy in a large country. At the height of the old *régime* venality was in Russia a natural corrective to the narrowness or severity of regulations. Toleration was obtained by bribery. The schismatics, or the Jews, or any class which suffered from administrative disabilities, got round them by bribery. Again, when you have a bureaucracy on a very large scale, a great number of the minor public servants cannot possibly live on their wages: they will be certain to supplement their insufficient incomes by exacting and receiving bribes. Administrative corruption was at one time practically universal in Russia. It has received much more than a considerable check since the creation of the Duma and the increased liberty

of the Press, since in the Duma questions can be asked, and transactions can be brought to the public notice which in the old days were securely screened from all possible investigation or inquiry.

The average Russian was probably not more venal than the average native of any other country. Some of the causes of his venality were common to the human race, and were such as produce venality in any time and in any country; and chief amongst these is the one I have already mentioned—the underpayment of the public servant. Another cause of corruption was the irresponsibility of officials. Until the Duma was made, public officials were, as a rule, immune from the law which in theory laid down severe penalties against all abuse of authority and all illegalities committed by officials in the performance of their public duties. All this has changed in the last ten years, and is changing still; there is infinitely less administrative corruption than there was. The average middle-aged Russian of to-day was brought up in an atmosphere in which the public revenue was regarded as a fair game for exploitation, and those

who cheated the State, or made money by bribery or any illicit means of any kind, were treated with the utmost tolerance.

In spite of this, the average Russian is not one whit more dishonest or immoral than his fellow-creatures in neighbouring countries. But if he is dishonest, his failing will be far more noticeable than that of the dishonest in other countries: firstly, because he will take infinitely less pains, or no pains at all, to conceal it; he will not hide it under a veneer of hypocrisy—he will wear it on his sleeve; secondly, because he is fundamentally good-natured, and his good nature varies from heights of Christian charity on the one hand, to depths of complete moral laxity on the other. On the one hand you have Dostoievsky's utterly disinterested Mwyskin, and on the other hand Gogol's completely venal Khlestyakov. The average Russian will probably have a dose of both qualities.

The average Russian is, above all things, a sociable being, who is fond of eating good solid food and drinking vodka, and who is averse to strenuous mental or physical exertion. This does not mean that you will not find any amount

of hard workers in Russia; but I am talking of the average man. And it is just the average man, *Monsieur Tout-le-Monde*, the man in the street, who is left out of the discussion when people think, talk, or write of Russia. The intellectuals are discussed, the Nihilists, the Socialists, the revolutionaries, the extreme reactionaries, the man of genius, the criminal, the martyr, the hero, the scoundrel, the æsthete. But the average Russian is, as a rule, neither a hero, a genius, a scoundrel, nor an æsthete. But he is in the long run the man who counts. It is with his sanction and co-operation alone that any great change has been made in Russian history. At the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war, he, the man in the street, was mildly in favour of it. After the initial reverses he was angrily in favour of it. After several months he was angrily against it, and his anger was directed against the Government. So much so, that the Government was compelled to take active steps, and to promise tangible reform. The climax of the hostility of public opinion happened when the whole country went on strike in the autumn of 1905. Then, for one

moment, the whole of Russia was in agreement, and public opinion was consequently irresistible. Later on, when political parties were formed, public opinion was no longer at one, and weakness began to set in.

Finally, when the constitutional and peaceable reformers had succeeded in effecting nothing beyond the creation of the Duma (which was in itself an immense step), and the militant reformers had merely achieved a series of sporadic acts of terrorism, one result of which was that the whole of the criminal classes followed their example and adopted their methods for the purposes of individual hooliganism—the average Russian, the man in the street, was alienated from the revolutionary movement, and no longer gave it his support. Naturally enough, for his pocket and his person were no longer safe. The street became no place for a man. He could no longer go for a walk in it without the possibility of having his private purse "expropriated."

Political theory had become a practical fact with a vengeance so far as the criminal class were concerned. And the political terrorists had

taught the impartial burglar the use and convenience of the Browning pistol, and had shown him how easy it was to rob a bank by bluff or dynamite. And as soon as the man in the street condemned revolutionary methods in Russia, the revolutionary movement came to an end. It could not live without his inarticulate support, without his active or passive sympathy.

And what is the average man doing or thinking now?

The answer to such a question must necessarily depend on the exact moment at which it is put. Had it been put in the summer of 1913—in July, say—it would have been safe to say in answer to this question, and in reviewing public opinion during the last two years, that the average Russian was consciously or unconsciously feeling the effects of the increased and ever increasing prosperity of the country; that he was manifesting indifference both towards internal and foreign politics; that he was making and spending money, and falling into a lethargy of prosperous materialism. But the autumn of 1913 has already shown how rash it would have been to make any such definite statement, without quali-

fication, and without leaving a door open upon fresh possibilities.

In spite of the increasing prosperity of the country—in spite of the rapid strides that education is making—seeds of discontent, which so far from being removed from above have been watered from above, have lately been making themselves manifest. And if it is too much—and it is too much—to say that the average Russian is as yet affected, it is at all events true that a considerable section of the educated, political, and commercial community, including many men well known in the political world who had hitherto supported the Government, are complaining in no uncertain voice of the acts of the administration.

There exist in Russia a great many antiquated and useless things in the shape of legislative and hampering regulations which need sweeping away. If the local administration of the country were universally excellent and competent, the average man would not probably trouble his head about them. But the local administration of the country is neither excellent nor competent: its acts are often perilously illegal. And

it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise, until the remains of the old *régime* are swept away from above, and a new *régime* is inaugurated. So far from anything being done in this direction, the old *régime* is being bolstered up; and so far from keeping their promises of reform, the central administration has been busy taking away, or limiting, what had already been given. The result of this has been that the Government has succeeded in exasperating a large part of the educated portion of the community. Discontent is being expressed. The Government has succeeded in rousing at least one section of the population from the lethargy brought on by prosperity; and as soon as this discontent has become sufficiently widespread, and sufficiently strong and universal to cause the man in the street not only to speak out, but, if not to act, at least to sympathize with action, then, unless some timely measures are taken from above, it is possible that efforts may be made from below to remove the causes of discontent.

In the meantime the man in the street is certainly aware of the prevalence of discontent,

and in many cases and places he is acutely discontented himself. It would be idle to speculate on what proportions his discontent will reach, and what its effect will be either in the immediate or the remote future. The future will answer this question. But ultimately, I think, it is safe to say that the achievement of political liberty in Russia will depend not on the dynamite and the death of revolutionaries however self-sacrificing and however ardent, nor on the measures of a statesman however far-seeing and however wise, but on the will and desire of the average man. On the day the average man really desires political liberty he will get it. So far, the only thing he has desired and obtained is individual liberty —liberty of thought, *liberté des mœurs*. In order to obtain political liberty, he will no doubt have to sacrifice a portion of the unbounded power he now enjoys of doing exactly what he likes in the sphere of personal conduct, because political liberty implies personal discipline, or a certain amount of personal discipline. Will the average Russian make a sacrifice? That depends, perhaps, on what store he will ultimately set on politi-

cal life and political freedom; on how far indifference will prevail; and also on the future policy and quality of the local and central administration. But in the long run the question as to whether any efforts towards obtaining political liberty will be successful or not, depends on the generation which is growing up, and which is as yet an unknown quantity. But whatever strange and new fruits the coming generation may bring forth, one thing is certain—no vital changes will come about in Russian life without the conscious or unconscious co-operation of the average man.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS.

IN Russia the representatives of the liberal professions—lawyers, doctors, professors, literary men, agricultural experts, statists, schoolmasters, journalists—are denoted, as a rule, by the generic term *intelligentsia*. The term is elastic, and its use, as I know by experience, can easily lead to the greatest misunderstandings; the reason of this being that the word is sometimes used in a broad sense, and sometimes in a narrow sense, and sometimes in a still narrower sense. That is to say, the word *intelligentsia* is sometimes used by Russians to denote anybody who can read or write, anybody who has received a certain education. That is the broadest sense of the word. In this, its largest sense, the word means the whole of the middle class, from which nine-tenths of the officials and public servants are drawn.

But when Russians use the word *intelligentsia*, they generally mean the members of the liberal professions, exclusive of officials.

Again, some Russians use the word *intelligentsia* in a still narrower sense, in order to denote not a class but a frame of mind; they use the word as we use a phrase such as "Nonconformist conscience:" and in this sense the member of the *intelligentsia* could belong to any class, just as in England a Liberal, a Nonconformist, or a vegetarian could belong to any class. And it is the use of the word in this narrower sense that leads to misunderstanding. For if you describe or speak of the attributes and the characteristics of the *intelligentsia* in this narrower sense, you run the risk of labelling the whole middle class of Russia with characteristics which do not apply to them; just as if in England the word Nonconformist were used not only to denote the Nonconformist sect, but the whole of the English middle class.

So, before going further, it is well to make one's position quite clear. In using the term *intelligentsia* in this chapter, I mean to denote, firstly, the representatives of the liberal professions—

lawyers, doctors, literary men, professors, schoolmasters, students, journalists, statists, and agricultural experts — the educated middle class, the intellectuals; and, secondly, the semi-intellectuals and the half-educated.

The intellectuals form, at the present moment in Russia, a factor of great interest and of great importance. They are largely represented by a political party, called the Constitutional Democrats, the Kadets, which played an important part in the revolutionary movement. The whole mass of the newspapers, both in the provinces and in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with the exception of some organs of a conservative and reactionary tendency, are edited by the intellectuals among the *intelligentsia;* and the ordinary staff of every newspaper, who make the paper, are recruited from the semi-intellectuals of the *intelligentsia.* It was the *intelligentsia* which, in the struggle for liberation, supplied the rank and file of the army, of which the county councils were the spokesmen and the leaders.

There is, as Mr. Stephen Grahame, one of the most competent of modern observers of modern life in Russia, says, an articulate part of the

intelligentsia, which he calls the higher *intelligentsia*, containing a great number of cultured and educated people; and side by side with this, there has sprung up lately a *bourgeoisie* that calls itself *intelligentsia*—a lower middle class, which takes to itself fifty per cent. of the children born in the great towns to-day. Mr. Grahame calls this the lower *intelligentsia*, and stigmatizes this latter class in severe terms as being materialistic and cynical.

I propose, then, to divide the middle class into two divisions—the educated and the half-educated.

Ever since the revolutionary movement the *intelligentsia* as a whole has come in for a large measure of abuse, not only from its enemies, but from members of its own class. It has for the first time in its comparatively brief history, if we except occasional indirect criticism, been subjected to a fierce and systematic criticism from the inside; the reason of this being that many Russian thinkers are convinced that the course of the revolutionary movement and the action of the first two Dumas showed that politically the Russian *intelligentsia* was immature, inexperi-

enced, unfit for political leadership, incapable of statesmanship, divorced in ideas and feelings from the people, and incapable of heading a popular movement. Some of these critics have gone further, and have dwelt on the religious indifferentism of the *intelligentsia* as a class as the explanation of the inability of the *intelligentsia* to act on the masses in Russia.

"The fact is," M. Bulgakov writes in the *Russian Review* of November 1912, "that educated or especially half-educated Russian society in its average representatives is almost without exception atheistic, or, to put it more correctly, indifferent to religion. A very superficial religious indifferentism, expressed most naturally in atheism, is met with on all sides, and everywhere in the Russian *intelligentsia*. The various political tendencies and parties among the *intelligentsia* carry on violent disputes with regard to various dogmas of sociological and political catechism, but do not discuss the existence or non-existence of God, or this or that religious belief. Here there are no questions, for it is taken for granted that there can be no talk of religion for the educated man, because religion is incompatible with

enlightenment." He goes on to say that the dogma that science has once and for all disposed of religion altogether is assimilated early in life by the "intelligent," and in most cases is not re-examined for the rest of his life. "In religion the Russian *intelligentsia* shows a kind of mental deficiency; on the average it is not above but below ideas of religion, for it has never properly experienced them."

This being so, the critics of the *intelligentsia* go on to say "that this lack of religion condemns them to remain out of touch with the people, for if they are divorced from the people in that which the people hold most sacred, how can they come close to them at all?"

There is nothing new in such criticism and such strictures; nearly all outside observers of Russia have said the same thing in the past. What is new is the quarter whence the criticism proceeds—namely, from the inside, from the *intelligentsia* itself; and this signifies that a reaction, or rather a revolt, is proceeding in some quarters amidst this prevailing materialism and this superficial indifferentism.

These are questions which are of great interest

to the Russian reader. To the English reader, who probably has not the slightest idea of the nature of the ordinary member of the *intelligentsia*, the question is probably less interesting.

Again, such critics, in writing for a Russian audience or for an English audience more or less acquainted with Russia, are not under the obligation of qualifying their statements by pointing out the good qualities and the merits of the *intelligentsia*, because they know that their readers are well aware of them, and will take them for granted.

But as the English reader is unaware of their qualities, either good or bad, it would be misleading to dwell greatly on defects to those who are unacquainted with the general atmosphere and the main characteristics of the people under discussion.

In the first place, the members of the *intelligentsia* are Russians. This fact, strangely enough, seems often to be lost sight of by their opponents, who talk of them as if they were made of some totally different substance from the remaining part of the Russian people. And if this is true of the *intelligentsia*, it is still more true of the

official world. Writers, and especially English writers, talk of Russian officials as if they too were made of some different stuff—as if they were a race apart which had nothing in common with the rest of the Russian people. This is not so. The *intelligentsia* and the officials are Russians; and being Russians, they have certain qualities and certain defects which are probably common to all Russians, which are the natural result of the Russian temperament. Where they differ from the classes which are above them or beneath them is in their education—or rather in the effect which that education has had upon them. The disease is the same; it is the way of taking it which is different.

They are extremely well educated; infinitely, incomparably better educated than the average Englishman. They are sometimes over-educated. The Russian mind assimilates with ease; it apprehends with incredible quickness; it is sensitive, receptive, plastic, agile. Such qualities in the case of men who are naturally thoughtful, studious, and serious, lead, of course, to a wide and deep culture. But in the case of the half-educated—in the case of people who quickly

assimilate a smattering of the ideas that are in the air all over Europe—the result is a radical immaturity, something that is immature in its very over-ripeness, something shallow, thin, and superficial.

In spite of this, if you take the average Russian of the educated middle class, he is extremely well educated—so much better educated than the average educated Englishman that comparison would be silly. The average Scotsman would compare favourably with him, and the average German: only the Russian has a quicker, more adaptable mind; and he is more inquisitive of what is going on outside the walls of his country than the average Frenchman.

If you took an average schoolboy of thirteen, and put him at an English public school, he would find the work given to an average English schoolboy of thirteen not only easy, but childish.

Moreover, the educated Russian is far more catholic in his culture than the average Englishman. A certain grasp of mathematics, of political economy and physical science, a knowledge of European history, would be looked upon by

him as a matter of course, whereas the English public schools and universities turn out not only undergraduates but dons who have specialized in one subject—and sometimes not well in that—but reveal an astounding ignorance in every other branch of human knowledge.

I remember once a Russian pointing out to me some remarks written in a popular book by an English don, and remarking that a Russian child could not possibly have written anything so silly. I, indeed, needed no persuasion. On the other hand, I remember one of the more radical members of the first Duma pointing out to me that in matters of practical political organization an English child could give the Russian political leaders points.

Most educated Russians are familiar with the works of Herbert Spencer, Huxley, John Morley, Buckle, and John Stuart Mill. They are at the same time not only familiar with, but acutely appreciative of, humorous and serious English literature—of Dickens, Bret Harte, Wells, Jerome K. Jerome, Conan Doyle, etc.

One of the stock things you constantly hear said about Russians is that they are wonderful lin-

guists. I believe this generalization to be largely built on the prowess of Russian men and women who have had foreign nurses and governesses. It is true that in St. Petersburg and Moscow society every one talks French, and most people talk English, and nearly every one knows German. It cannot be said that the English of St. Petersburg is of the purest. It is a dialect peculiar to St. Petersburg, and full of strange idioms translated from the French. Such phrases as, for instance, "One says he is very frightful" (meaning, "They say he is very frightening"), or, "I find her a bother" (meaning a bore), are characteristic of that fluent dialect. However, if it is not pure, it is at any rate fluent.

But if you take the average representative of the middle classes in Russia, you will sometimes meet with a knowledge of French, more often with a knowledge of German, and seldom with a conversational knowledge of English; but not universally with either of these three. Nor will you find that the average representative of the Russian middle class learns these languages with more than average speed when he is abroad; although the Russian is, as a rule, very quick

to appreciate shades of meaning and forms of humour which are peculiar to other languages than his own.

Taken as a whole, the middle class in Russia is cultivated, widely and deeply cultured in its upper strata, and in its best representatives more widely cultured than the average Frenchman or German. In its lower strata, among the half-educated, the "little learning" that has been rapidly assimilated has indeed proved a dangerous thing, and has produced in the head of the individual a salad of half-baked philosophy and superficial Nihilism which remains fixed for ever like a dogma.

In this sense the half-educated in Russia are in a state of adolescence. They have cast aside what they regard as the superstitions of boyhood, and they have accepted as incontrovertible dogma the ideas which they believe to be the most advanced in Western Europe, and have poured them into a fixed mould, where they remain stereotyped for the rest of their lives.

This is what M. Bulgakov means when he says the half-educated in Russia are not above

religion, but below it; not superior to it, but inferior to it.

In using the word half-educated, I am alluding to the larger class of people in Russia who have just emerged above the surface of the uneducated: members of the proletariat often, peasants sometimes who have received half an education, clerks and minor public servants, and students who have not passed any of the higher standards. It is amongst this class that you find a chaos and welter of half-baked ideas; it is here that you find a jumble, a salad of ill-assimilated and strangely-assorted goods, a flotsam and jetsam of Western philosophies and theories, crystallized and hardened into rigid dogma, and clung to and paraded with a desperate *amour propre* and a fierce tenacity. It is, of course, the negative philosophies which are chosen. When a schoolboy reaches the age of adolescence—when he first makes the discovery in England, say, of Renan on the one hand, and of Swinburne, Ibsen, and Nietzsche on the other—he is tremendously proud of what seems to him his bold and rebellious "views:" he labels himself a "freethinker" and a pagan. He is filled with iconoclastic zeal.

He feels like young Siegfried about to storm Walhalla, and bid its tottering halls crumble before his sword. If he is at the university, he will perhaps refuse to go to chapel from conscientious scruples, and he will wear a red tie on Sunday to show he is a Socialist.

"I read the Gospel as an ordinary book," said a young freethinker to the late Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol. "Really, Mr. Smith," said the master, "you must find it a very extraordinary book."

Later on he finds the question is not quite so simple as he imagined, and that the old-fashioned superstitions are tougher than he imagined; that science has not spoken the last word on religion; and that certain facts and ideas had perhaps escaped his plausible philosophy. He makes the discovery that the higher criticism is not always infallible, and that disbelief is sometimes quite as intolerant as belief; that freethinkers are not always free. In fact, he grows up.

But in the case of the Russian half-educated, they do not, as a rule, grow up intellectually. They reach the stage of rebellious and destructive denial, and remain there. Fragments of

Nietzsche, Marx, and Schopenhauer contribute to the intellectual salad which constitutes their negative creed; and once that creed is formed, it no longer develops—because in the atmosphere in which the half-educated live in in Russia they will meet with nothing to counterbalance this negative influence. They regard this negative philosophy as a thing which is taken for granted by all sensible and educated men, a thing about which there can be no possible doubt. Atheism is a matter of course, like a pair of trousers. There can be no other possible creed for an educated man. If a man is not an atheist he is not educated. Intellectually he wears his shirt outside his belt, and not tucked in. Socialism or Anarchism is the only possible political creed. If a man is not a Socialist or an Anarchist, he is obviously a member of the "black-gang" of reaction. Any educated man who goes to church or is religious is, in the eyes of the half-educated, a member of the black-gang—a fanatic, an anti-Semite, an obscurantist.

He will remain stationary in this negative view, because this view is in the air he breathes and amongst the people with whom he consorts.

He will never come across the contrary view; and he will consequently take for granted that all views to the contrary, all religious belief, all disbelief in disbelief, are confined to the uneducated, and that as soon as the uneducated (the peasants) receive the "light," they will free themselves from these old-fashioned and cumbrous shackles of superstition. He will be, moreover, immensely proud of his negative creed, which he will regard as the hall-mark of culture and the password which admits him to the intellectual parliament of man, the enlightened federation of the world.

Mr. Belloc, in one of his essays, I think, tells the story of an educated man who lived alone and isolated in a village in the Vosges, far removed from towns, railways, and means of communication. Thither Mr. Belloc wandered one day, and this man, who entertained him, unpacked with pride the baggage of portable atheism which was current in the 'fifties. Mr. Belloc told him atheism was no longer thought to be an indispensable hall-mark of education, and no longer regarded as the key to all philosophies. He was distressed and be-

wildered. That is exactly what the half-educated in Russia are now being told by many Russian writers—Berdayev, Bulgakov, Ern, Rachinsky, Florensky, Kozhevnikov, Samarin, Mansurov; but the news has not yet penetrated into their inner consciousness.

It had already been proclaimed by greater men than these—by Dostoievsky, Tyutchev, and Soloviev; but the message of these men of genius has not reached the hearts of the half-educated in Russia. They are still in the stage of the Oxford undergraduate who reads the Gospel as an "ordinary book."

But let us leave the half-educated and go back to the fully-educated. It is, perhaps, needless to say that Russia is rich in men of European reputation who have rendered noble service to science in many branches, and especially in medicine. What is perhaps less well known to English readers is that in the medical profession in Russia not only will you find many names which enjoy a European reputation, but the standard of competence, knowledge, and ability is almost universally high. All over Russia, no matter how remote the place, you will be

sure to find a general practitioner who is not only highly competent, but highly cultivated. Moreover, these doctors live the hardest and most self-sacrificing of lives: they drive long distances in all weathers; they have to struggle against the enormous odds imposed on them by the rigorous climate, the poverty and the backwardness of the great mass of the people; and often they have to deal with scourges, such as epidemics of typhus, cholera, and even plague.

Socially, the average member of the Russian middle class is attractive, expansive, and easy to get on with. He is completely devoid of hypocrisy, and untainted by snobbishness and pretension. He is friendly, good-humoured, and hospitable, and, when not afflicted by hypochondria, a cheerful companion. He is fond of discussion. An Englishman living with a Russian family is struck, as a rule, by the long conversations that go on, sometimes far on in the night, generally about politics or abstract questions. There is no conventional limit of hours. If these people want to go on playing cards all night, they will go on playing cards all night; they will not

stop because they think "it is really time to go to bed."

In thinking over the characteristics of the educated middle class in Russia and the educated middle class in England, the chief differences are, of course, the same that differentiate the natural character of the Russian and the Englishman. The Russian middle class is, if you take the average, not only better educated, but more broad-minded, less provincial, less pretentious, far less reserved and less self-satisfied, and not at all hypocritical. It is also, I should say, less self-disciplined; and it has often struck me that those members of the *intelligentsia* who are most violent and bitter in their denunciation of the arbitrary behaviour and the irresponsible despotism of the Government are, if one sees them on a committee, far more despotic and arbitrary than the most despotic official. But that is perhaps the logical law of human nature.

The average Russian is certainly less self-satisfied than the average Englishman; although he is sometimes self-satisfied in some respects and in a quite different fashion.

Self-praise is not a thing you often come across in the Russian *intelligentsia*. On the contrary, you far oftener have its members comparing themselves unfavourably with their neighbours. But this note of self-depreciation sometimes exists side by side with one of pride and vanity, which is sometimes pardonable and sometimes not. I came across an instance of this lately in a large Russian newspaper—the *Russkoe Slovo*.*

A writer in an article on English life and Englishmen, in which he makes a number of interesting appreciations and criticisms, compares the two countries, and after making the debatable statement that, in his opinion, Russia and England are the only two countries which are now playing a significant part in the historical arena, says, "Yet what a gulf there is between us. How far more intelligent, how far more talented, how far broader-minded, how far more sincere are we!" It is difficult for either a Russian or an Englishman to settle such a question. They are neither of them the best judges; yet I should say, personally, that this writer is

* *Russkoe Slovo*: "At the Music Hall: G. Bayan," September 14 (27), 1913.

probably right, if you take the average. On the other hand, my impression is — and it may very likely be a false one — that this broad-mindedness, talent, cleverness, and sincerity is spread in a certain even proportion more or less equally and uniformly over a larger social stratum in Russia, producing a certain high level and standard of general intelligence; whereas in England, where no such high standard exists, you may encounter gulfs and precipices of complacent ignorance and narrow-minded stupidity; but, on the other hand, you will meet with high peaks and jagged rocks of originality, imagination, and sometimes genius. In England, while the general standard of intelligence is immeasurably lower, the exceptions are more remarkable, and not merely because they are exceptions, but in themselves. Contemporary literature affords a good example of what I mean. In Russia, the average reading public and the novel-reading public is on a much higher level than the average English-reading and novel-reading public, and the average literature food supplied to it is higher also: the average Russian novel or story never descends to the level of

silliness which you find in the great majority of English magazines. On the other hand, contemporary English literature contains more names that are famous, and whose fame has crossed the frontiers of their country, than contemporary Russian literature. For instance, if we put Gorky with Kipling as belonging to a past generation, there is in Russia no imaginative writer of the present generation who can be compared with H. G. Wells; no realistic novel as fine as Arnold Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale;* no writer as original as G. K. Chesterton.

The Russian stage is on a far higher intellectual level than the English stage, and the Russian theatre-going public is incomparably more intelligent than the English theatre-going public; yet the Russians have no dramatist whose plays (with the exception of one play by Gorky) are acted all over Europe, such as those of Bernard Shaw. The ordinary Russian intellectual may despise Bernard Shaw's philosophy and drama—in fact, the writer of the article I have just quoted cites as an instance of the low level of the English stage, the fact that Bernard Shaw who, he says, is " a back number " in Russia, is considered the

first of English dramatists. But is it certain the Russian has realized Shaw's humour to the full? This, moreover, does not prevent it being true that Bernard Shaw's plays are acted all over Europe, as well as in Russia; that the French have called him the modern Molière; and that contemporary Russia has produced no dramatist who can claim so large a public, nor so wide an appreciation in Europe.

The writer of the article I have quoted says that the Russians and the English are alike in possessing two faces. In generalizing on the characteristics of a people, and especially the Russian and the English people, one must always bear in mind the element of paradox and contradiction that exists. With regard to the English people, this writer notes the fact of the contrasts you meet with in England, and the dual nature of the English character; but whereas he notes the naïveté of the English public, its boisterous mirth in contrast to the serious element in many phases of English life, the imaginative quality of the English seems to have escaped him. "I think we are an imaginative people," writes Mr. Wells about the English in India, "with an

imagination at once gigantic, heroic, and shy; and also we are a strangely restrained and disciplined people who are yet neither subdued nor subordinated. . . . These are flat contradictions to state, and yet how else can one render the paradox of the English character and the spectacle of a handful of mute, snobbish, not obviously clever, and quite obviously ill-educated men, holding together kingdoms, tongues, and races, three hundred millions of them, in a restless, fermenting peace?"

"Yes, it is true," I would answer to this Russian journalist; "probably true that you are far more intelligent, far more talented, more broad-minded, and less hypocritical than we are." And then I would ask him to read some further words of Mr. Wells, which concern circles of the official English in India, "conventional, carefully 'turned out' people, living gawkily, thinking gawkily, talking nothing but sport and gossip, relaxing at rare intervals into sentimentality and levity as mean as a banjo tune." Among such, he says, "a kind of despairful disgust would engulf me. And then, in some man's work, in some huge irrigation scheme, some feat of stra-

tegic foresight, some simple, penetrating realization of deep-lying things, I would find an effect, as if out of a thickly-rusted sheath one had pulled a sword and found it a flame."

The Russian writer has forgotten, or has never come across, the flame; and that is not surprising, for the flame is not obvious to the casual observer. But the Russian character has felt its heat, expressed as it is in the phases and images of English writers of genius in the present as well as in the past. The flame has left its marks on Russian literature.

I can imagine a Russian brooding or reasoning over Russia—say the Russia of the remoter provinces—much in the same way as Wells reasons over the British in India. I can imagine him saying: "Again and again I would find myself in little circles of minor official Russians, slovenly, superficial, despotic in their disregard of other people, lax, casual, cynical, carefully 'educated' people, living noisily, thinking noisily, talking nothing but cheap philosophy and gossip, relaxing at frequent intervals into fits of drunkenness, gambling, and extravagance, as sordid as the tune of a barrel organ,

and a kind of despairful disgust would engulf me. And then in some man's speech, in some sudden flash of white-hot sincerity, some stripping naked of the soul, some gesture of human charity, some evidence of sympathy and understanding, some simple, penetrating realization of divine things, I would find an effect, as if in a heap of mouldering refuse, festering weeds, and broken bottles I had stumbled across a tin box, and forcing it open, found it filled with precious balm and myrrh —celestial in its fragrance." And then perhaps he might have added: "I think we are a great-hearted people with a humanity at once charitable, broad, and deep; and yet we are a tough, obstinate, arbitrary, and undisciplined people, who are as yet neither socially independent nor politically free. These are flat contradictions." I am certain of one thing. Any generalizations on the characteristics of any people must include flat contradictions, and especially any generalizations on the Russians of any class; for the whole of Russian history is based like a fairy tale on a huge paradox—namely, the survival of the weakest, and the triumph of the fool of the family; the strength of the fool being that he

has something divine in his folly which outwits the wisdom of the wise.

In speaking of the prevailing dead level of a high standard in things intellectual in Russia, I gave literature as an example. Perhaps I ought to cite some of the sister arts as exceptions; but with the exception of music, perhaps, the same rule applies here too. In the decorative arts Bakst has attained a European reputation, and in stage design and stage decoration Russia stands perhaps higher than any other European country at present. But here it should be noted that one of the great pioneers in advanced stage decoration in Russia was Gordon Craig, also a case in point of the startling exception, startling in himself as well as an exception to the encircling mediocrity. The Russian stage has felt not only his influence, but his direct inspiration; and Aubrey Beardsley is responsible in Russia for a whole chaos of decadent illustrators. Then there is music, in which Russia is collectively and individually far superior to England at present. These are questions which need separate and more detailed treatment; but it is worth while mentioning here that the greatest exception to

the rule—if it is a rule—that in Russia you will find a high standard and few towering exceptions, is to be found in the operatic stage in the person of Shalyapin, who by common consent is, besides being a magnificent singer, the greatest living actor and artist on the operatic stage, and perhaps on any other stage either. On the other hand, the first theatre in Moscow, the Art Theatre, furnishes an example of the original rule—nowhere in Europe is the *ensemble* so perfect, the troupe so well disciplined, the production so harmonious; yet the company contains no single actor or actress of genius.

It is, of course, the *intelligentsia* who suffered most in the past, since the epoch of the great reforms of the 'sixties, from the want of political liberty in Russia, and it is from the ranks of the *intelligentsia* that the revolutionary movement started. They had, until the creation of the first Duma, no means at all of taking part in public life unless they became officials and entered the Government service.

Those who did not play an active part in politics were not, it is true, or were only indirectly, hampered by this state of things. They were

hampered, that is to say, by the censorship on certain books and on certain ideas, by the caution of the press and the absence of public debate, by the liability of falling under the suspicion of political heterodoxy; whereas those who took a part in the revolutionary movement, either directly or indirectly, were liable at any moment to suffer in person for their opinions, and they did suffer. In their action as active revolutionaries, in the manner in which they were ready to undergo any sacrifices, however great and however tedious, the Russian revolutionaries belong to the great and authentic martyrs of the world. They sacrificed themselves without any fuss or ostentation. They were willing to endure years and years of imprisonment or exile if they thought that would benefit their cause. They went on hunger-strike when the rules of their imprisonment were not being properly carried out, if the quality of the food supplied to them was not up to the standard, or if the prison regulations were not being properly fulfilled; but not because they were put in prison. That they accepted as a rule of the game. Nothing broke their

indomitable and patient purpose. They were ready to abandon everything which makes life worth living, and they claimed neither the hero's laurel wreath nor the martyr's crown. They were content to be anonymous; they gladly gave their bodies to be crushed, if, they thought, they could thus make stepping-stones over which future generations could walk. The Russian revolutionaries did not go out of their way to seek to lose their lives; but they were ready, if the occasion demanded it, to give their lives. But as far as their main policy was concerned, they took the offensive against the Government; and not being allowed to express their opinions in print or in public, they expressed them with dynamite.

In looking back at the whole movement, one is struck by the absence of cant in the methods, the writings, and the behaviour of the *active* revolutionaries. They were as simple and as natural in their assassinations and their martyrdom as they were in the rest of their behaviour. They showed the same absence of hypocrisy. Some people call this the Russian simplicity; others call it (Mr. Conrad, for in-

stance) Russian cynicism. It is, if you like, a kind of inverted cynicism; a reckless way of looking facts in the face, and of stripping the soul of all its decent trappings. And yet there is nothing Mephistophelian about it—no mockery, no irony, but an inverted and inflexible logic which leads people to disregard all barriers and to carry out in practice what they preach in theory, though they should cause the pillars of the world to fall crashing to the ground.

I have been speaking, of course, about the active and militant members among the revolutionaries, not of its platonic and passive sympathizers. Amongst those you may find the political cant which is common to that species of mankind, of all races and in all countries.

But if you take the Russian middle class as a whole, absence of cant and hypocrisy is certainly one of their chief characteristics. Uniformity of education is certainly another. "Culture" is made into a fetish (and this is true of all educated people in Russia). A certain stereotyped form of culture, including a certain number of subjects, is looked upon as being as indispensable as clothes. A man who is lacking in the

visible label and hall-mark of this so-called "culture" is looked upon as if he were morally naked.

The worst of it is, the possession of this culture does not necessarily mean that its possessor is cultivated. It is often skin-deep and a random assortment of superficial ideas, confined sometimes to the knowledge of certain names and catchwords, and to a second-hand acquaintance with certain books, theories, and currents of thought.

The idea that this kind of "culture" is indispensable, and that a man who does not possess it is uneducated, is undoubtedly a bureaucratic idea, and the fruits of the long-standing existence of bureaucracy. Such culture is a superstition, and has nothing necessarily to do with real culture, which implies the assimilation and the thorough digestion of any kind of knowledge.

But, as I have said before, it is more especially to the half-educated that this applies. The truly well-educated middle class have revealed their culture to the world in the shape of the men of science, the historians, the economists they have produced, and the books they have written.

But the Russian intellectual middle class is historically still young. The greatest works of the Russian genius in the past were written before it existed, when they were as nothing, and came from the nobility. The future will show what the *intelligentsia* in their turn will produce. But such as it is at the present moment, it offers to the student of Russia a field of surpassing interest; and the Englishman who goes to Russia and lives among its members will come back, as a rule, with the horizon of his mind widened, and in his heart a soft spot for the Russian *intelligentsia*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

THE Russian Church calls itself the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Orthodox Church. It is a national Church, and at the same time it is a branch of a great Christian community which includes many nations and peoples—namely, the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Russian Orthodox Church numbers at present over a hundred million adherents, eighty millions of which are Russian subjects; of the remainder about half are Slavs of old Turkey or of Austro-Hungary. Greeks, Roumanians, Bulgarians, and Serbs all belong to the Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox Church has missions in China, Japan, and North America.

Until the eleventh century the Eastern and the Western Churches formed one Church. In the eleventh century a schism broke this unity

and divided a large fragment of the Eastern Church from the Western Church.

Even after the schism had taken place, even as late as the beginning of the twelfth century, intercommunion existed between the two Churches, and Russian princes and princesses of Kiev intermarried with members of the Latin Church. Efforts were made later to heal the schism, the most important of which were the second Council of Lyons in 1274 and the Council of Florence in 1439. At both these Councils union was proclaimed and accepted by the Greeks, but neither of them had any permanent result. The findings of the first of these two Councils soon became a dead letter; those of the second were repudiated as soon as the Greek delegates reached home, and the delegates were regarded as apostates. Thus the schism has lasted practically since 1054. It was fraught with deep moral and political consequences for the East, and especially for Russia. The cause of it was not really doctrinal or dogmatical. Points of dogma, and trivial points at that, were used as pretexts after the schism had become a *fait accompli*. The true cause of the

schism was the immemorial rivalry between the Greeks and the Latins.

The schism between the Eastern and Western Churches ranks, Sir Charles Eliot says in his *Turkey and Europe*, with the foundation of Constantinople and the coronation of Charlemagne, as one of the turning-points in the relations of the East and the West. It was disastrous to Russia and to the Byzantine Empire. To the latter, because it crystallized and deepened an antagonism which prevented the East and West from combining against the common enemy, and thus proved one of the main causes of the fall of the Byzantine Empire and the establishment of the Turk in Europe. To Russia, because, isolated as she was already by her geographical situation, by this further isolation and rupture with the West she fell an easy prey to the hordes of barbarian invaders from Asia, and her national development was interrupted for centuries. As far as dogma is concerned, the differences between the two Churches are to this day trivial, and in earlier times they were slighter still. The Orthodox Church has the same seven Sacraments as the Catholic Church—

namely, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Unction, Holy Order, and Matrimony.

There is a certain difference in the administration of the Sacraments. The Orthodox baptize with a threefold immersion. Confirmation is administered immediately after baptism; and this was so in the West during all the thirteenth century. Auricular confession is regarded as indispensable by the Orthodox, but the Sacrament of Penance is less precise and more flexible than in the West. The Orthodox Church holds the dogma of Transubstantiation. That is to say, the Orthodox believe that the Holy Eucharist is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ under the outward appearances of bread and wine, and that transubstantiation takes place—namely, the change of the inward imperceptible substance into another substance; while all the species and accidents—that is to say, those qualities which are outwardly perceived by the senses, such as colour, taste or shape—remain unchanged. They reject all explanation of a typical or subjective presence. Holy Communion is given in both kinds to the laity; the Sacrament is administered by means of a golden spoon, in which particles of

the bread of the Eucharist float in the consecrated wine. Infants receive Holy Communion after baptism. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction, called by the Russians *Soborovanie* (that is to say, Unction without the extreme), is administered by several priests, and is not reserved for those *in extremis;* it is regarded less as a preparation for death than as a means of healing the sick.

With regard to Holy Order, no priest in Russia is allowed to marry after he is ordained. He is married before he is ordained, and marriage has become a necessary preliminary to Order.

The Orthodox Church proclaims the indissolubility of marriage, but in practice admits that the infidelity of one of the parties authorizes separation. Violation of the conjugal oath is regarded as annulling the sacrament, and only the injured party is allowed to remarry.

The Orthodox have the same fundamental cycle of feasts as the Catholics. The Holy Liturgy is said according to two rites—those of St. John Chrysostom and of St. Basil.*

The Orthodox observe four great fasts:

* There is also in Lent the Mass of the Presanctified.

Advent, forty days from November 15 until Christmas Eve; Lent, beginning on the Monday after the sixth Sunday before Easter; thirdly, a period from the first Sunday after Pentecost until June 28; fourthly, the fast of the Mother of God from August 1 to August 15. According to the Orthodox fast, only one meal is allowed a day, and abstinence not only from meat, but from fish, butter, milk, cheese, eggs, and oil is required. The fasts are carried out by the poor with great strictness, and even among the wealthier classes there is more fasting and abstinence during Lent than in the West. Statues of our Lord or of saints are forbidden, but pictures and any images on a flat surface are allowed.

To sum up, the foundations of the Orthodox faith are: Belief in one God in three Persons, in the Incarnation of God the Son, the Redemption of Mankind by the sacrifice of His Life, the Church founded by Him with her Sacraments, the Resurrection of the Body, the Life Everlasting. They have a hierarchy; they accept the Deutero-canonical books of Scripture as equal to the others; they believe in and use seven sacraments; they honour, invoke, and

pray to saints; they have a cult of holy pictures and relics; they look with infinite reverence to the Mother of God.

In all these main points, which I have here enumerated, there is no difference between the Orthodox Church of the East and the Catholic Church of the West. The two Churches originally separated on minor questions of discipline; they are at present separated by certain questions of dogma as well. But the great difference between the two Churches is the difference of constitution, which proceeds from the very fact of the separation. The first difference in dogma between the two Churches is the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Eastern Church refuses to add the word *filioque* to the Nicean Creed. But even here, although the Orthodox do not admit that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, they have never explicitly stated a contrary belief; and although they deny that the twofold procession can be inserted in the Creed, they grant it allows of an orthodox interpretation. This is a purely theological dispute, and to this day it remains the chief point of difference between the two Churches.

The two Churches differ in their conception of purgatory; the Orthodox pray for the dead, and believe in a middle state, where the dead sleep and wait passively; but they do not define the matter any further, and they reject all idea of the purification by spiritual fire. They deny that souls which have departed this life can expiate their faults, or at least the only expiation they admit are the prayers of the faithful and the Holy Mysteries.

The Orthodox deny the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception is that all mankind are from their conception tainted with Original Sin, except the Blessed Virgin, who by a special privilege and grace of God was preserved immaculate—that is, free from the stain of Original Sin from the first moment of her conception.

I repeat this definition because it is not generally known to Protestant Englishmen, who, as a rule, confuse the Immaculate Conception with the Incarnation of our Lord, and I know of cases where they obstinately maintain this belief in the face of evidence.

The doctrine, although not accepted in theory

by the Eastern Church, is practically a part of their belief—that is to say, they never cease to call the Blessed Virgin All Immaculate, or Very Immaculate.

Finally, the Orthodox Church deny the dogma of Papal Infallibility. This is in reality the only difference between the two Churches which has any real importance, either religious or political, because it includes any other possible difference, and from it proceeds the difference in constitution and in political situation between the two Churches.

For Catholics the door on dogmatic definition has been left open indefinitely; for while holding, *de fide*, that the revelation made to the apostles was final and complete, new *definition* of the revelation, as is seen in the creeds, as heresies arise, or as fuller expansion of doctrine, is admitted indefinitely.

On the other hand, the Orthodox believe that the time for definition has been closed, once and for all, and for ever. They believe that nothing can be added to the decisions of the first Seven Great Councils, which took place before the schism between the two Churches, and which

contained, according to them, the infallible, final, complete, and unalterable definition of the Church and the dogmas of the faith. The Orthodox regard the first Seven Councils to have been infallible in the definition of dogma, exactly in the same way as Catholics consider the Pope to be infallible in his capacity of supreme Pastor of the Church, when speaking *ex cathedrâ* he defines revealed truth and teaches points of faith or of morals. The Orthodox deny that the Pope has authority over the whole Church. The Russian and the Greek catechisms agree that the Church has no other head than Jesus Christ, our Lord—so far this agrees with the Catholic catechism—and that He is represented by no vicar on earth. The Orthodox regard the Pope as the Patriarch of the West, and legitimate first Patriarch (*primus inter pares*), but they reject his universal claim.

And as the first Seven Councils left some matters undefined and the Fathers of the Church did not foresee all possible contingencies, such matters remain undefined in the Orthodox Church.

Since the Orthodox Church possesses neither

a spiritual sovereign nor an international capital, such as Rome, it naturally tends to decentralization, and hence the growth of national and independent Churches, which the Greeks call autocephalous.

The Russian Church was the first to establish its independence, and the example of Russia was followed by Greece, Servia, and Roumania.

In 1872 Bulgaria, in obedience to its national interests, seceded from the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, in order to be no longer classed with the Greeks; for, according to the Turkish system, all those who submitted to the jurisdiction of Constantinople were officially classed as "Greeks."

Thus the Bulgarians formed an autonomous Church in the domains of the Ottoman Empire, alongside of the Greek Church, before Bulgaria constituted a State, and for so doing they incurred the anathema of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople, and were condemned as heretical, since the patriarchate maintained that the delimitation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction should correspond to political delimitation, and that in the same political state there could only be one

Church. Bulgaria's action, therefore, was contrary to church canon—that is, heretical. Nevertheless its independence was recognized by the Sultan, and the Bulgarian Church was established under an Exarch of its own, while Russia, without making any definite pronouncement, nevertheless never accepted the anathema of Constantinople.

A few years later Bulgaria became an independent principality, and had the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate been limited to the principality of Bulgaria, the Œcumenical Patriarchate would have been logically bound to recognize it; but according to the firmans of the Sultan, the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate extended beyond the frontiers of Bulgaria, and included the dioceses of Thrace and Macedonia, which nominally belonged to the Sultan and were a bone of contention between the Greek and the Slav influence. Thus the Græco-Bulgarian schism continued. This question has now once again sprung into importance. The dioceses of Macedonia and some of those in Thrace, which were under the religious jurisdiction of Bulgaria, and under the political dominion of the Porte, are

now, as the result of the latest wars in the Balkans, and of the Treaty of Bucharest, partly in the hands of the Servians, and partly in the hands of the Greeks. Hitherto the Bulgarian Exarchate was the nucleus around which all the elements of Bulgarian nationality in Macedonia were gathered; but now, owing to the second Balkan War, the Bulgarians in Macedonia come under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Servia, and are in fear, consequently, of losing their nationality, since the Bulgars fear that neither their churches nor their national schools will succeed in maintaining their existence in the new Greek and Servian territory. The consequence was, that some of the Bulgars in those parts of Macedonia talked of secession from the Orthodox Church, and submission to the Church of Rome, or of embracing Protestantism, as the best means of preserving their nationality.*

In spite of these differences, the Russian Church and the independent Churches of the East form in reality one, for if they lack unity of organization, they possess unity of creed, and the unity of creed is ensured by its immutabilty, which

*It is very improbable that anything of the kind will occur.

renders unnecessary all international authority or periodical congresses. Since matters of dogma have been discussed once and for all, or have been left vague and undefined indefinitely, there is nothing for such an authority to define, and nothing for such a congress to discuss. And the panegyrists of the Orthodox Church are proud of the lack of central authority and the organization of the Churches according to States, which they consider combine unity of creed with ecclesiastical independence, according to Homayakov's formula, " Unity of freedom in love."

But if the nationalization of the Oriental Churches is a source of strength, it is at the same time a source of weakness, for the result of the national constitution of the Orthodox Churches, and of their having no spiritual head, has been that many of its branches have been secularized, and of this the Russian Church is a signal example.

The Orthodox Churches, and especially the Russian Church, were thrown open to the civil power, the power of the State, and became subordinate to it.

The Russian Church became subject to the

State. It is often said that such a circumstance is a guarantee of political liberty and of liberty of thought; but neither the history of Russia nor that of the Greek empire furnishes us with examples to the point. Both in the history of Russia and of Byzantium we are confronted with two phenomena — intellectual stagnation and political despotism—to which the Church seems to have contributed, since being subject to the State she had no means of resisting civil authority, and the power of the State was left without a single check. The civil authority had the support of ecclesiastic authority, and the temporal authority was backed up by the spiritual power; no obstacle was raised in the path of autocracy.

The alliance of Church and State kept down the intellectual growth of the nation within, and prevented the invasion of new ideas from without. The result of the alliance was stagnation and isolation. And in the East there was no common clerical language, as Latin in the West, to help civilization, for the Greek Church did not impose its language on its sister Churches, but left to each the use of its own tongue.

This peculiar constitution of the Russian Church, as Sir Charles Eliot puts it, "has produced in Russia an almost Mohammedan confusion of Church and State, or at least of religion and politics."

But this state of things did not come about all at once.

Christianity reached Russia through Byzantium at a time (988 A.D.) when the Eastern Church was still in communion with Rome, after a temporary schism between the East and West; a Russian Metropolitan held the see of Kiev, and was appointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople. During this period the Russian Church was a province of the Byzantine Patriarchate.

Then came the Tartar invasion and the migration of the Russian princes to the basin of the Volga, and finally to Moscow. Moscow had a Metropolitan who was still suffragan of the Greek patriarch, but elected by his clergy and chosen by his sovereign. This was the second phase of the Russian Church during which it gradually acquired its independence. Moscow became a kingdom, and at the death of Ivan

the Terrible, in 1589, Russia demanded a Patriarch. In 1589 Job, the Metropolitan of Moscow, was consecrated Patriarch. This was brought about by Boris Godunov, in the reign of Feodor, the successor of Ivan the Terrible (1589).

Thus began the third phase of the history of the Russian Church—the phase of its independence. The Russian Church was henceforward independent of Constantinople.

There were ten Patriarchs of Moscow in succession. At first they played a powerful and important part in Russian history, and helped to save Russia from foreign dominion.

The culminating point in the history of the independent Church was reached when in the reign of Alexis, in 1642, Nikon became Patriarch.

The Partriarchate of Nikon had two great and far-reaching results—firstly, a conflict with the civil authority which ended in his defeat and deposition from the patriarchal throne, and in a consequent loss of prestige to the patriarchate; and secondly, a schism which tore the Russian Church in two, and which was the result of a wise reform—the revision of the text of liturgical books, into whose text, owing

to continuous copying and recopying, inaccuracies had crept.

Nikon spoke with great energy against the supremacy of the State over the Church. Six years after his consecration, he was brought before a Council, condemned and deposed, thanks to the intrigues of the Boyars. His revision of the texts was accepted by the Council, but not by a great part of the Russian people, who clung obstinately to the old unrevised books and called themselves "Old Believers." Hence arose the great schism of the Russian Church. The "Old Believers," were persecuted and became fanatical. Besides the revision of the texts, Nikon changed one or two trifling details of ritual in the liturgy. This was enough to convulse Russia. Later on, all enemies of foreign innovations flocked to the camp of the "Old Believers," endured any persecution, however severe; and the net result of this, at the present moment, is that there are 25,000,000 Russians who live in schism from the Russian Church.

The fall of Nikon established once and for all the authority of the State over that of the Church, and the great schism weakened the authority of

the Church, owing to the secession from it of a great part of the nation. The patriarchate was shaken and weakened; but weak as it was, it appeared too strong to suit the taste of Peter the Great, who abolished it in 1721.

In its place he established the Holy Directing Synod. Thus began the fourth phase of the Russian Church, which has lasted until to-day.

There is nothing necessarily anti-liberal in the existence of a synod, and it is not peculiar to the Russian Church. Greece, Roumania, and Servia administer their Churches by means of a synod. Its tendencies depend necessarily on the manner of its election, the nature of its guarantees, the laws and customs of the country in which it exists.

The Holy Synod consists at the present day of executive members and assistants, of permanent and temporary members. Among the permanent members are the Metropolitans of Kiev, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, and the Exarch of Georgia. The temporary members consist of four or five archbishops, bishops or archimandrites, the emperor's chaplain, and the

head chaplain of the forces. All the members are appointed by the Emperor, and in addition to these ecclesiastics, the Emperor appoints a delegate who is called the Procurator-General. The procurator is a layman, and represents the civil authority. His duty is to see that ecclesiastical affairs are carried out in accordance with the imperial ukases. No act of the synod is valid unless he confirms it. He has the right of veto, should its decisions be contrary to the law. Practically, therefore, but not theoretically, he controls the synod; and in his turn he carries out the will and obeys the orders of the Emperor.

It would be a great mistake, however, whatever may be the result of this institution in practice, to call the Emperor of Russia the head of the Russian Church. He makes no such claim, and Russian orthodoxy recognizes only one Head of the Church, our Lord, and only one infallible authority speaking in His name, the Seven First Œcumenical Councils. The Emperor may be the autocratic master of the Church; he is not the head of it. His authority is from the outside only. In questions of dogma he has no authority at all. He is regarded as

the temporal defender and guardian of the Church; his authority, and consequently the authority of the State, concerns the administration of the Church solely, and even here his power is limited by tradition, canon law, and the œcumenical character of the Church.

Dogma is equally outside the domain of the Holy Synod, and even disciplinary measures come before the Holy Synod as before a commission of inquiry, the final decision remaining with the Church.

Such is the teaching of the Russian Church with regard to relations of Church and State, and the position of the Emperor with regard to the Church.

Yet in spite of this, there is no Church where the influence and the authority of the State is so deeply felt as in the Russian Church; for in practice the Church is governed through the Holy Synod, and not through the bishops, for the synod overrules the bishops, and in practice, and in spite of the theory, the procurator overrules the synod, and the procurator is the civil authority in the flesh. The Russian Church is consequently, in practice, a State Church, and

many of its earnest members have never ceased to deplore the fact.

Russian books dealing with theological questions in the past are full of this bitter and oft-reiterated complaint; but I will quote what an apologist of the Russian Church wrote as short time ago as November 1912, showing that the complaint of the past is if anything more vital now than ever. In an article on the Russian public and religion, S. Bulgakov says that a faithful and powerful ally of the atheism of the *intelligentsia* is without doubt the secular character of the Church, its ruinous dependence on the State under the synod *régime*, and owing to the absence of self-government. He also says that one of the reasons of the alienation from the Church, not only of the *intelligentsia* but of the people, is the bureaucratic caste of the Church administration, the access of officialdom and arbitrary power to the fields of freedom and love. "It is not," he writes, "a question of any corruption or distortion of dogma; on the contrary, the Russian Church adheres with devotion to the dogmas of the Universal Church.

"The main lever by which the State directs the Church at present is the episcopacy, which, contrary to canon, is appointed by, and consequently to a certain extent picked out by, secular authority. The Holy Synod is likewise chosen from these bishops, and by secular authority also. . . . The bishops, who should remain all their life in their dioceses, have been commuted into ecclesiastical governors, changing dioceses more quickly than the governors change provinces. . . . Theoretically, the Orthodox Church should be self-governing from top to bottom, but the painful reality reveals on the contrary so great a paralysis in the public life of the Church, as to give the outside observer the impression that nothing is here but ecclesiastical governors, under the direction of the procurator of the Holy Synod and the secular authority that is behind him, with a clergy stripped of all rights."

Such a statement sums up what has been constantly said in the past, and what is being said with increasing vehemence in the present by earnest members of the Russian Church, who recognize with sorrow the almost total alienation

of the Church from the educated classes, and look forward with apprehension to the day when the indifference of the educated and the street-corner atheism of the half-educated shall spread to the peasantry. But, on the other hand, the very fact that such statements are made shows that side by side with the growth of rationalism there is a movement in the opposite direction as well.

Many years ago, in the days of the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation, educated Russia was divided into two camps—the Slavophils and the Westernisers. The leaders of the Westernism were Bielinsky and Herzen; those of the Slavophils, Homyakov, a poet and the father of the Ex-President of the Duma; and others.

The Westernisers saw in rationalism and atheism the last word of Western culture, and made a religion out of socialistic Utopias, and at the same time took part with a fervent enthusiasm in the struggle for political freedom. Orthodoxy and the Church were to them an expression of despotism and reaction.

The Slavophils, who were, in their most

flourishing epoch, by no means political reactionaries, and being more cultured than their opponents were saturated with the philosophy, art, and religion of the West, nevertheless revered the religious character of the sovereign's authority, based Utopias on it likewise, and, in contradistinction to the cosmopolitan ideal of the Westernisers, for whom nationality did not exist except ethnographically, made a cult of nationality which for them was inseparable from religion and orthodoxy. There was the same difference between their ideals as there is now between those of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Blatchford; only whereas in England Mr. Chesterton has but few followers, the Slavophils were expressing the inarticulate aspirations of the great mass of the Russian people.

Slavophilism was represented by many men of genius, such as Dostoievsky the novelist and Vladimir Soloviev the philosopher.

Its tradition has not died out, and although the majority of the *intelligentsia* may be adherents of the opposite school, yet the descendants of the Slavophils have many notable representatives among the minority (whose names I

have already cited) in philosophy, art, and literature; and a universal characteristic of them is their interest in religion.

The ordinary Russian street-corner atheist sees in the Church nothing but an instrument of clerical obscurantism and political reaction. He looks at the matter from the outside, and, from his point of view, the opinion is excusable.

But the descendants of Slavophilism look at the Church from the inside. They know from experience the blessing of the Sacraments, the majesty of an immemorial tradition, the glory of a mystical and liturgical Church whose ritual and liturgy is one of inexpressible richness, depth, and beauty. Even to the most indifferent agnostic the Russian Church affords a spectacle of surpassing æsthetic interest, and if he is musical an incomparable source of wonder and delight in the quality of its sacred song.

As far as ritual and ceremony is concerned, the practice and custom of the first centuries of Christianity, which were in many cases simplified by Rome, before they were curtailed or rejected by the Reformation, have been preserved intact in the East. Nothing is more false

than the idea which often prevails in some quarters that the rites of the early Church were simple, and grew more and more complicated towards the Middle Ages. The rites of the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries were long and complicated, and were gradually simplified by the Latins. The proof is the ceremonial of the Eastern Churches, which has remained exactly where it was in the fourth and fifth centuries. Mass, for instance, in the Coptic Church, lasts five hours or longer. Low Mass, which was one of the simplifications introduced by Rome, is unknown in the Greek and Russian Churches. Every Mass is a high Mass, intoned and accompanied by plain song, in the presence of the faithful, and generally only on Sundays and holy days. The same liturgy and rite is observed by the Uniate Catholics, whether Greeks, Ruthenians, Poles, etc. The liturgy is sumptuous, and at the same time austere. There is only one altar, which is separated from the congregation by a large screen called the *iconastasis*—that is to say, the screen which bears the holy images—which has doors which are opened and shut during Mass, and beyond which the priest alone, and

the Emperor when he receives Communion on the day of his coronation, has the right to penetrate. Behind these doors, which are shut before the consecration, the most solemn part of the Mass is consummated. No organ or any other instruments are allowed in the Eastern Churches, and, as in the Sixtine Chapel when the Pope says Mass, only the human voice is heard.

As far as liturgical song is concerned, the Russians have far surpassed the Greeks, from whom they received it. The liturgical music consists of plain song, and of original chants called *raspievi*, which date from the Middle Ages. The singing of the Church choirs in Russia is without comparison the finest in the world. The bass voices reach to notes and attain effects resembling the 36-foot bourdon stops of a huge organ, and these, blent with the clear and bold treble voices of the boys, sing

"An undisturbed song of pure concent."

The best Russian choirs sing together like one voice. They attain to tremendous crescendoes, to a huge volume of thunderous sound, and to

a celestial softness and delicacy of diminishing tone. There is no finer chorus singing. The Russians are extremely particular and appreciative of religious music. Every kind of institution, including banks, has its private choir; and I know of a case where a banker chose his clerks simply and solely according to the quality of their voices, so as to form a choir who could sing in church.

The finest choirs in Russia are those of the Emperor, St. Isaak's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, of the Cathedral of the Assumption, and the Church of St. Saviour, and the Tchudov Monastery at Moscow; and the finest religious ceremonies are those which take place at Moscow during Holy Week and on the eve of Easter.

Religious music in Russia has its roots in the heart of the people. And whatever in the future may be the influence of rationalistic tendencies and materialistic theories, of superficial indifferentism or ill-digested science, the Russian people at the present moment love their liturgy and the ceremony, ritual, and music of their worship. The Church still plays an overwhelming part in national life. And for the peasant, the

Church is not only a place of mystery, sweetness, and consolation, but his window opens on to all that concerns the spirit — it is his opera, his theatre, his concert, his picture gallery, his library.

The Russian people still flock to the shrines of the Saints, and walk hundreds of miles on foot to visit holy places. A peasant woman once asked me to lend her two roubles, as she was going on a journey. I asked her where she was going to, and she said, "Jerusalem."

A pilgrim in a Russian crowd is as constant a factor as a soldier, a student, or the member of any other profession. The churches are still crowded in Russia, and they have that attribute without which a Church is not a Church—they smell of the poor.

CHAPTER IX.

EDUCATION.

EDUCATION, like everything else in Russia, has, in the course of its existence, experienced many sharp ups and downs, which were the outcome in the past of the vicissitudes of history, and, in less remote times, of changes in the policy of successive governments.

The birthplace of education in Russia was the Church. Until the Tartar invasion, education was entirely in the hands of the clergy; and like everything else in Russia, it necessarily suffered an eclipse during the epoch of the Tartar domination. Peter the Great created secular schools, sowed the seed of technical education, which was later to bear such abundant fruit, and planned an Academy of Sciences which was executed by his widow Catherine.

The University of Moscow was founded in 1755, in the reign of the Empress Elisabeth. Catherine II. encouraged education in many ways; but it was not until the reign of Alexander I. that an attempt was made to organize a national system of education. From that time until the present day, education has experienced spurts of progress and relapses into stagnation, according as the political pendulum swung from reform to reaction. From 1812 to 1855 reaction was predominant. In 1855 education, as everything else, revived under the influence of the great reforms. After the assassination of the Emperor Alexander II., in 1881, another period of reaction set in, which lasted more or less until the Russo-Japanese War; then came the revolutionary movement which broke down certain barriers, and was succeeded, as far as education is concerned, by a Government policy whose constant tendency has been towards reaction, and here as elsewhere, and in other matters, to take back or to curtail and limit with one hand what it had given with the other. But although the Government has constantly interfered with and hampered the organization

of education, it has not only been powerless to withstand the great movement towards the extension and progress of education which is at this moment taking place in Russia, but it has in some cases taken the initiative in educational reform, so that if it curtails with one hand it has none the less given with the other; and the gift is more important than the limitations, because, once made, it opened windows that could never be shut again in spite of all possible curtailments. In Russia at the present moment there is a great and ever increasing demand for primary, secondary, technical, and higher education.

Primary education, which in Russia is always gratuitous, is in the hands either of—

(*a*) The Zemstvos, in the country.
The Municipalities, in the towns.
(*b*) The Church.
(*c*) The Minister of Education, to a small extent in that part of Russia where Zemstvos exist, and a large extent in the ukraines where there are no Zemstvos.

The course of primary education is planned on

a basis of from three to six years. In all primary schools, reading, writing, and arithmetic, and religion are taught.

The tendency towards a longer and slower course, because a three years' course, while it teaches a boy to read once and for all, has been found not to leave a lasting impression on him as far as writing is concerned.

The boy after a three years' course will never forget how to read, but he will entirely forget how to write.

The primary schools are full to overflowing, and have to turn back pupils all over the country.

As far as the teachers are concerned, 60 per cent. of them are women, 40 per cent. are men. Only a small proportion are specially trained teachers; the rest, especially among the women, have merely finished their course at a Government Gymnasium.

Of the three classes of primary schools, the best are those which are in the hands of the Zemstvo; then next in order of merit come those which are in the hands of the Minister of Education; and next the Church parish

schools,* which are gradually being suspended and ousted by the others.

All these schools were till quite lately (three or four years ago) supported either by the respective authorities in whose control they are, or by private persons. As the sums of money rendered available by such a system were totally insufficient to defray the necessary expenses, the consequence was that the general progress was slow. A radical change in this situation was made by an Education Bill, which was introduced into the Duma by the Government, and passed by the Duma a few years ago. This most important measure provided that the various authorities indicated above, which control the schools, should receive yearly from the Government a sum of about £40 in order to pay for the schooling of fifty children—that is to say, for the salary of one teacher for every fifty children, on the condition that the Zemstvo, or the other controlling authorities, as the case might be, should

* These are more or less in a state of decay, and in spite of periodic spurts of activity brought about by various stimuli, such as Government grants, they always lag behind the Zemstvo schools, as they are a nuisance to the clergy themselves, who rarely have time to attend to them.

undertake to build, in a period of ten years, a number of schools sufficient to meet the needs of the whole population of their respective districts. The result of this Bill will be that in about five to six years' time Russia will have enough schools for the whole of its population, and will be able to contemplate the practical realization of compulsory education.

As it is now, in European Russia the percentage of people who can read or write is only 22·9 in Siberia, and in the Caucasus it is less (12·3 and 12·4); but it is higher in Poland (30·5), in the Baltic provinces (71–80), and in certain governments, such as Moscow (40) and St. Petersburg (43–53).*

Before considering the question of secondary education in Russia, it must be pointed out that all secondary and higher education in Russia is of two kinds—namely, technical and general.

General secondary education is either directly in the hands of the Minister of Education, or in the hands of private persons under the close supervision of the Minister of Education. There

* I quote these figures from the Russian Year Book, compiled by Dr. Howard Kennard, for 1913.

are, as in Germany, two classes of general secondary education—classical, which is taught in the gymnasia, and non-classical, which is taught in the Real Schools; the gymnasia are attended by boys and girls, but the schools are as a rule not mixed. The Gymnasium's course of instruction lasts eight years; that of the Real Schools, seven.

The subjects taught in the gymnasia are as follows: Religion, Latin, Greek, Russian, mathematics (as far as logarithms and the binomial theorem, and including trigonometry), history, natural sciences, French or German, English (optional).

The course of the Real Schools is the same, except that it excludes Latin and Greek, attaches much more importance to mathematics and natural science, and has two obligatory foreign languages (French and German), and one optional foreign language.

The course for girls is the same in kind, but less in degree. The tendency for girls is to go to the Real Schools in preference to the gymnasia; and besides the gymnasia and the Real Schools, there are also for girls a certain number of in-

stitutes and gymnasia founded by the Empress Marie, open only to the daughters of the nobility, and to foundlings and orphans. These gymnasia are more or less the same as the ordinary Government gymnasia; the institutes are closed pensions, organized more or less on the lines of a French convent; the pupils are boarders, and the teaching of languages in these institutes is especially good.

In the ordinary gymnasia the average number of pupils is 372, and the average number of pupils in each class is 35. These schools are open to people of every class; but this does not exclude the possibility of nobles or other persons founding special private schools for members of their particular class.

In the gymnasia and Real Schools the pupils are mostly children of town dwellers and guild artisans; the pupils live at home, and go to the school only during school hours.

The school terms last from September 1 until Christmas, and from Christmas until June 1, leaving a holiday of three months in the summer.

The hours of work in school are from 9 a.m. until noon, and then, after an hour's interval for lunch,

from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., making five hours a day. Preparation is done at home. There are no half-holidays. On the other hand, there are many whole holidays, since every saint's day in Russia is a whole holiday, and besides the saints' days there are other holidays as well. One point of interest, in comparing Russian secondary schools with English secondary schools, is that in Russian schools there is no such thing as corporal punishment, and if a Russian schoolboy were chastised or beaten by a teacher he would be almost ready to commit suicide from shame. In the Russian gymnasia and High Schools, the level and quality of the teaching are high. A university degree is required from all teachers, except in some rare cases in the lower classes of girls' gymnasia. On paper, and theoretically, nothing could appear better than the system of Russian secondary education. It seems to have all the advantages of the German system, and at the same time to be a little less strenuous.

Nevertheless, almost any Russian, if you ask him what is the chief characteristic of Russian secondary education at present, will answer that the education received is bad and unsatisfactory.

And if you ask whether this is the result of an incomplete or faulty programme of instruction, or of incompetent and inadequate teaching, he will say, No; the scheme of instruction is sufficiently extensive and difficult, the teachers are well trained, competent and conscientious; it is in spite of this, they tell you, that the education which is the fruit of this laborious course is unsatisfactory, and the culture obtained comparatively low. If you press for the reason, they will point to the influence of the Government over the schools. The Government do not exercise an open and direct pressure on the schools, but they never cease from interfering indirectly with them. They exercise a kind of censorship over education; the teachers are being constantly checked; certain subjects and certain topics are tabooed; and the nature of the censorship varies with the changing ministers.

Thus it is that education tends to be intensive in one direction and incomplete in another; and the net result is that the culture obtained is to a certain extent superficial, and that the product of the Russian secondary schools is a youth who is intellectually half-baked.

One of the chief results of the attitude of the administration towards the schools is that the pupils look upon their course of education solely as a means of getting a diploma; they cease to be interested in the education itself which is provided for them, and they throw themselves with exaggerated vehemence into any other political or philosophical channel outside it—into socialism, materialism, theoretical and practical anarchy.

This is what Russians tell you, and it is no doubt true from their point of view; nevertheless, if you compare the average level of secondary education in Russia with that which exists in England, you will notice at once that the average Russian, as I have said earlier in this book, is infinitely better instructed. I use the word "instructed" purposely; because if you take education in the larger sense, it is often the case that the more ignorant Englishman has on the whole a better balanced education than the over-instructed Russian. That is to say, the intellectually immature product of the English schools will often be saner and nearer to reality and practical life, and fitter to deal with the emergencies of

life, than the intellectually overripe Russian, who is immature in his very overripeness; and who, by nature being intellectually plastic, agile, and assimilative, receives an education of a kind that starves him where he needs feeding, and overfeeds him where he needs a low diet, and leads him to seek for himself just that kind of intellectual food and drink which is likely to inebriate him, and to ruin his intellectual digestion. With regard to the course of education itself, he becomes simply and solely a diploma-hunter.

These remarks do not apply to technical secondary education. There are in Russia technical secondary schools of agriculture, engineering, mining, forestry, and railways (all under the management of the different ministries). The general course of education received here is the same in character as that given in the gymnasia and the Real Schools; but it is combined with a special course, and the technical schools produce a type of youth who is not only more practical and nearer to reality, but who is more really cultivated in spite of the fact that the pupils of the gymnasia have the advantage of the more general course of education.

There are also cadet schools and special schools for officers under the Ministry of War, which are sufficiently good; and commercial schools (similar to the Real Schools), under the direction of the Minister of Commerce.

The number of schools in Russia is still not really sufficient for the demand; and since the regulations binding on the institution of schools by private persons have become less stringent, the increase in the number of such privately organized schools has been enormous, and this testifies to the greatness of the general demand for education.

Higher education in Russia is also of two kinds, technical and general.

General higher education is supplied by the universities. There are universities at Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Kharkov, Yurieff, Warsaw, Kazan, Odessa, Tomsk, and Saratov.

The largest university is that of Moscow, where there are nearly ten thousand students; and that of St. Petersburg, where there are eight thousand. Admission to the university takes place once a year, and admittance is given to all students who have passed what the Ger-

mans call their *Abiturienten Examen*, at their secondary school—that is to say, their leaving-certificate examination. Besides the universities, there are higher technical schools, which we will come to presently.

The system of university teaching is the same as that which exists in the rest of Europe and in Scotland; the faculties include jurisprudence, physics and mathematics, medicine, historical philology, Oriental languages, and divinity.

But the part played by the universities in Russian life and the special character of Russian university education are unique.*

Every Englishman who is at all interested in Russia will be probably aware of the immense influence that the universities have had on the current of modern history in Russia.

* University education is *the* education in Russia. It has a traditional pretension to be superior to all other (specialized) education, owing to its encyclopædic and philosophical character. The Russian characteristic of knowing something about everything and having vast *aperçus* is fostered by it. The university is to the Russian student what Paris is to the Frenchman, what Athens was to the ancient world. The student often misses the lectures of his own course and attends the lectures of other faculties, and this is encouraged by the professors, who did the same when they were young. In Russia, erratic and sporadic information is preferred to systematic and narrow knowledge.

The young, the adolescent in all countries, have often played a part in politics, whenever the politics of a country have been in a state of ferment. Sometimes the expression of their zeal takes the form of patriotism, as in the War of Liberation in Germany; sometimes, if the form of the Government is reactionary, it leads them to go and fight at the barricades.

In Russia the students have always taken an interest in political matters; but at the beginning of the century the universities were small and aristocratic. Nevertheless, in 1825, secret societies existed all over Russia, largely recruited from the ranks of the young, and these finally organized an insurrection in St. Petersburg, which has become famous in Russian history as the Decembrist Rising; and which stands in contrast with all later insurrectionary risings in Russia, in that it was exclusively the work of the nobility and the gentry, and was confined to that class. The society which brought about this insurrection modelled itself on the German association of students, the *Tugendbund;* and although its practical results were nil, it left a tradition which the students on the one hand, and the Government

on the other hand (although unconsciously), never permitted to die out.

All through the 'forties and the 'fifties, as secondary education first became a fact and subsequently went on increasing, the universities grew not only large, but democratic, and formed a democratic nucleus; and it was here that the rationalistic movement which started in Western Europe found the most grateful soil and the quickest response. Liberal ideas had always flourished among the students, and this blend of liberal and rationalistic ideas, as soon as it began to spread and to increase, met with a counter-movement of repression from all successive governments. And it is the glory of the Russian universities that they never ceased to keep the flag of their ideal, their demand for political freedom, flying, and were always the soul of any progressive political movement.

The universities were originally autonomous, and though they were deprived of their liberties for a time in the early part of the century, they retained them fully in the reign of Alexander II.; it was not until then that the universities came to be an important factor, since up to that

period they had been, as I have already said, small and aristocratic; and it was only in the 'fifties that they became democratic and large enough to count. The privilege of autonomy which had been given to the universities meant that they were administered solely by a board of professors, at the head of which was a rector. This state of things lasted until the reign of Alexander III., when the universities were again deprived of their privileges and their autonomy, and the Government tried to administer them directly, with the usual result that trouble ensued; only the trouble brought about by the conflict of the Government with the universities was more turbulent in character than that produced by its clash with any other institutions or classes of society.

A continual state of effervescence and of disturbance on the one hand, and of repression on the other, lasted until 1908, when autonomy was again restored to the universities; and during the next five years university life began, in spite of periodical strikes and closures, more or less to settle down; but as reaction set in, a part of its activity was directed against the

liberties of the university. In 1911, for instance, all the professors in Moscow were forced to resign.

At the present moment, if we do not hear of disturbances in the university, this can be attributed to the reaction among the students themselves, who are in a natural state of depression at the result of the revolutionary movement of 1905, which from their point of view was a complete failure. It may safely be said that it is most improbable that such a state of things will last very long, and even now there are unmistakable clouds on the horizon. The policy of the Government of giving, in educational matters, with one hand and of hampering and hindering with the other, was bound and is bound to result in trouble sooner or later. The troubles which occurred in the recent past in the life of the universities, during and subsequent to the revolutionary movement, without doubt lowered the general standard of education. The results obtained at present are worse than they should be, considering the excellence of the professors. Moreover, the constant troubles which arose in the life of the universities during the

revolutionary period, caused generally by some move on the part of the Government, and invariably followed by repressive measures (involving temporary closure), drove thousands of students to seek education abroad.

All that I have said about the universities applies to the higher technical institutes, only in a lesser degree. There is a considerable number of such technical institutes in Russia. St. Petersburg alone can boast of a Polytechnic, a Technological Institute, a Mining Institute, an Institute of Civil Engineers, a Higher Commercial Institute; and in addition to these there are institutes in other parts of Russia where higher education can be had in the branches of mining, railways, ways and communications, forestry and agronomy, besides an increasing number of agricultural schools all over the country. The difference between the character of higher technical and higher general education, between the higher technical schools and the universities, is the same as the difference between the character of the technical secondary schools and the general secondary schools.

As in the case of technical secondary educa-

tion, higher technical education produces a more practical type than the universities; and the students of the higher technical institutes only take part in politics when matters have reached a definite crisis, in which their action can have practical effect. The great importance of the universities and of the higher technical institute in Russia lies in the fact that they supply the ranks of the whole of the higher *intelligentsia*. All lawyers and all doctors come from the universities, and the life and the fate of the universities affect the cultured classes vitally. This works both ways. The universities affect the cultured classes, and the cultured classes act on the universities.

For instance, every medical officer in every county council is a university man, and he will be vitally interested in the fate and doings of his *alma mater*. Any blow at any particular university will affect a whole class of people all over the country; the influence of the universities spreads like a network over the whole length and breadth of Russia, and produces an *esprit de corps* and a strong spirit of freemasonry among the former students of the various universities.

Games and physical exercise are not a feature of Russian education—certainly not at least in the English sense; and though outdoor sports, such as boating and football, have been introduced, and are popular in some of the universities—Odessa, for instance—it is impossible at present to discern even the dawn of any trend towards physical sports and exercise such as we have in France or Spain, for instance.

Lately, however, an organization of gymnastical societies, under the supervision of Czech instructors, and in some ways resembling the German *Turnvereine*, have taken a firm root in the towns, and enjoy great popularity; these societies hold yearly festivals, and organize competitions between various towns. The popularity of these societies is likely to increase in the future.

Besides the universities and schools I have mentioned, there are still a great many more educational institutions: veterinary institutes, schools of art, archæology, Oriental languages, and law; seminaries, ecclesiastical and naval schools, and private institutions; and at the top of the ladder of education there are two

academies, one of art and one of science, consisting of professors, men of science and letters, who are chosen by election. Scholarships and grants to poor students are distributed both by the universities and the higher technical schools.

If one reviews the question of Russian education as a whole, one is forced to the conclusion that the material both of the teacher and the pupil is good; the staff of teachers excellent; but that the whole system is continually and fundamentally vitiated by a policy, not exactly of repression, but of constant censorship, interference, checking, nagging, and hindering which saps the school life of Russia, and deprives it of all potential interest and vitality for the pupil. It is reduced to an official machine, which turns out either a specimen of bureaucratic mediocrity, or a rebel who reacts against it and is driven to anarchy and dynamite. If the Government were to leave the whole matter alone, there is no doubt that the schools would not only manage their own affairs perfectly peacefully and well themselves, but that they would succeed in turning out a type of youth who would be more really cultured than the present over-

ripe and immature, half-baked, yet partially burned specimen, which is the average product of a system of education which cannot fail to be one-sided and unsatisfactory so long as it is cramped and diverted from larger channels by the exasperating supervision of a paternal, officious, and suspicious administration.

CHAPTER X.

JUSTICE.

THE judicial system of to-day in Russia dates from what is called the Epoch of the Great Reforms—that is, of the reforms made in 1864 by the Emperor Alexander II. His new judicial system is, next in order to the abolition of serfdom, the most important of those reforms.

Up till 1864 justice in Russia dwelt behind closed doors. It was organized on a class basis. There was a court for the gentry, a court for the townsman and for such peasants as did not belong to landowners. Judicial decisions, civil and criminal, were based solely on documentary evidence prepared by the police. No oral evidence was admitted. The proceedings were held *in camera*. The judges appeared in public only in order to pass sentence or to deliver a judgment. It is needless to say that a system of

this kind encouraged venality, partiality, and injustice.

In reforming the old system, the Imperial Government borrowed elements from the judicial systems existing in France and in England, but it by no means confined itself to slavish imitation. The aim of the reformers was to reach the principles and ideas on which our system and the French system are based; and they created a new system founded on ideas which have been endorsed both in theory and in practice by modern civilization. The chief principles at the basis of the reformed judicial system in Russia are—(1) the separation of administrative and judicial powers; (2) the independence of the magistrate and the tribunals; (3) the equality of all subjects in the eye of the law (the abolition in the eye of the law of all class distinctions); (4) the publicity of trials; (5) the adoption of oral procedure; (6) the participation of the people in the system through (*a*) the introduction of trial by jury, (*b*) originally, although this was altered later, the election of judges. As a general principle, it can be laid down that important cases in Russia are tried, as they are tried elsewhere in Europe,

by jury, in public and at the assizes; with one notable exception, that of all political offences and all crimes and misdemeanours committed by the Press, which are tried without a jury.

Where the Russian system differs from the English and the French systems is that the judicature is divided into two sections mutually independent, and differing in the extent of their jurisdiction and in the manner in which their judges are appointed.

As in many other countries, there are two branches of tribunals—firstly, what were actually, and what now correspond to, justices of the peace, dealing with petty cases; and, secondly, ordinary tribunals dealing with larger matters. These two branches of justice are quite distinct. They are parallel to each other. They are separate and isolated one from the other, and meet only on the top of the ladder in their common right of appealing to the Senate, which is the highest court of appeal.

Beneath this double system of judicature, local courts exist in every canton: (*Volostnye Sudi*), *tribunaux de bailliage*, which were established when the serfs were liberated, dealing ex-

clusively with the peasants' affairs, and in which both the judges and judged are peasants.

The Canton Court consists of a tribunal of three judges elected by the peasants. It deals with small cases, and deals with them largely according to established custom and tradition. It stands to reason that peasants will deal with matters which concern their own customs, codes, and idiosyncrasies far better than people of any other class.*

The judicial system which comes next above the Canton Courts is dual: Petty and Grave. The Petty cases are entrusted to local justices of the peace, town judges, and *zemskie nachalniki*.

In 1864, when the judicial system was reformed, all such cases were dealt with by justices of the peace, who were elected by the Zemstvo. In 1889, the elective justices of the peace were done away with, and they were replaced by *zemskie nachalniki*, who, as I have already explained in Chapter IV., are a kind of official

* According to a new law, which comes into force on January 1, 1914, a higher village court has been created for the consideration of appeals from the Canton Court, consisting of the local justice of peace as chairman, and the presidents of the Canton Courts of the district as members.

squire, exercising executive and judicial authority over the villages in their district. They are nominated by the governor of the province and appointed by the Minister of the Interior. Elective justices of the peace have survived only in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Kharkov, and some other towns, where they are elected by the town assemblies for a term of three years on a property qualification.*

In all other towns, and everywhere else, where there are justices of the peace, they are now appointed by the Minister of Justice.

This rather complicated system (under which the functions of a judge were committed into the hands of persons (*zemskie nachalniki*) who were in their main attributes representative of the executive) is now to be abolished by a new law recently passed by the Duma, which divests the *zemskie nachalniki* of their judicial functions, and replaces the elective justices of the peace all over the country. This new law comes into force in regard to ten provinces on January 1, 1914, and will be extended over the remaining

* Nishni-Novgorod, Kazan, Saratov, Kishniev, and the district (*yiezd*) of St. Petersburg.

part of the country in the course of the next year. The jurisdiction of the new justices of the peace has been increased by the new law. In civil matters they are now competent to try cases involving fines amounting to 1,000 roubles, and criminal offences carrying a sentence of simple imprisonment without any curtailment of civil rights. The appeal from the justices of the peace is made to the general meeting of the justices of the district; and from the decision of this meeting (*siezd*) an appeal is allowed, on points of law only, to the Senate. The Senate, as is shown below, may either dismiss the appeal or order a new trial. There is, however, no appeal to the Senate at all where the sentence carries with it a fine of less than 100 roubles. The limit is now 30 roubles.

In the hands, then, of the justices of the peace or of the *zemskie nachalniki*, as the case may be, are civil claims not exceeding 500 roubles (£50), and criminal cases where the penalty does not exceed four months' imprisonment or a fine of 300 roubles (£30). Appeals against the decision of a justice of the peace may be

made to a bench of justices presided over by a justice of the peace elected by his colleagues; appeals against the verdicts of town judges and of the *zemskie nachalniki* are heard by the District Tribunal (*Uiezdny Siezd*), a court—the sessions of the district—of which the marshal of the nobility of the district is the *ex-officio* chairman, and which consists of *zemskie nachalniki* (with the exception of course of the particular *zemsky nachalnik* or town judge against whose verdict the appeal is being made), town judges, and the so-called honorary justices of peace.

Appeals against the verdict of the local courts (*Volostnye Sudi*) are also heard by this district tribunal.

An appeal against the verdict of the District Tribunal (*Uiezdny Siezd*) is allowed on points of law only, and goes before a special Board called the *Gubernskoye Prisustvie*, consisting of the governor of the province, as chairman, members of the Divisional Court, and some higher civil servants of the province.

Parallel with this branch of justice, which deals with petty cases, we have quite separate from it another branch which deals with more serious

cases, and which consists of two tribunals: the Divisional Court (Court of Assizes), and the High Court.

The Divisional Court deals with all civil cases (with the exception of petty cases), and roughly speaking, with all criminal cases, with the exception of those which concern the prosecution of officials for misdemeanours committed in the performance of their official duties, and also the great majority of political offences, which are dealt with by the High Court. The criminal cases which come before the Divisional Court can be judged by the bench only, or by the bench and a jury; but if the offence is such that the punishment may limit the civil rights of the accused, or deprive him of them altogether, the case must be tried before a jury. Generally speaking, all criminal cases of any importance are tried before a jury.

The Divisional Court goes on circuit from place to place; its jurisdiction usually extends over five or six districts, and sometimes over a whole government.

The Russian judicial system is the same as the French system as regards the nature and composition of its tribunals, its tribunals of first in-

stance, its facilities for appeal, its court of high appeal (*Cassation*), its instruments of justice, and its method of procedure. The justice of the peace and the *zemsky nachalnik* (who at present fulfils the duties of a justice of the peace), and the town judge (*Gorodskoi Sudya*),* are the only judges who sit alone. In all other tribunals there is more than one judge. Every civil or criminal case in Russia must be heard by three magistrates, one of whom is the president.

A judge is irremovable unless he should commit a criminal offence. He can be transferred, but he cannot be removed. Attached to every Divisional Court and every High Court there is a magistrate appointed by the Government called the procurator (who is not irremovable, and holds office at the pleasure of the Minister of Justice), who corresponds to the French *procureur;* he is the advocate-general and public prosecutor. His business is to prosecute crime. But before the case reaches the procurator, it undergoes a preliminary investigation at the hands

* This officer is to be abolished by the new law. At present he exercises the same judicial functions as the zemsky nachalnik, with the difference that his jurisdiction is in the town districts, that of the zemsky nachalnik in the country districts.

of an examining magistrate (*Sudebny Slyedovatel*) who corresponds to the French *Juge d'instruction*. He begins his investigation at the instance either of the police, or of a private individual, or of a plaintiff. Theoretically, the investigation was supposed to be entirely separate from the prosecution; but, in practice, the examining magistrate has become more or less a tool in the hands of the procurator. The examining magistrate has the right either to refer the result of his investigation to the procurator, or to let the case drop altogether, should in his opinion the grounds for further proceedings be insufficient.

The public prosecutor (*Procurator*), on receiving the *dossier* of the case from the examining magistrate (*Slyedovatel*), can either ask the court to drop the proceedings in view of the failure of the prosecution to make a case, or else he draws up a bill of indictment (*Obvinitelni Akt*) on which the accused has to take his trial. In the case of more serious offences, the bill of indictment, before it goes before the court, has to be confirmed by the High Court (*Sudebnaya Palata*), which acts as the French *Chambre de Mise en Accusa-*

tion. Civil cases do not go before the *procurator*, and are tried, as in France, without a jury.

The procedure resembles that of a French court of justice. First of all, the witnesses (in criminal cases) are called, and each witness tells his story consecutively. He is then cross-examined by the procurator, and then by counsel for the prosecution and counsel for the defence. Cross-examination is by no means so formidable as in an English criminal case, because the counsel for the defence can at any moment insert a question amongst the questions put by the counsel for the prosecution. When all the witnesses have been heard, the procurator speaks for the prosecution. He is followed by the counsel for the plaintiff, and then by the counsel for the defence. After this, the procurator replies to the counsel for the defence, and they in their turn can reply on given points. The President of the Court then sums up, and puts to the jury the questions on which they are to give their verdict.

The jury have the right of putting questions to any witness, as well as to the counsel for the prosecution and to the counsel for the defence.

The jury consist of twelve men, "good men

and true." They are chosen from all classes of the population, from the whole of the inhabitants of the district, subject to certain conditions of age, property, domicile, and position. In the first place, there is a property qualification, which varies according to different localities. All those who fulfil the conditions of the law as regards the age and property qualification are entered on a list (*obshchy spisok*) and become liable to serve on a jury. From this larger list, a second narrower list (*ocheredny spisok*) is drawn up of the men who seem the more qualified for the work.

The sifting process, of which this second list is the result, is carried out in every district by a Board including several officials, the marshal of the nobility for its Chairman. The process is repeated every year, and after the sifting about sixty men remain on the second list, out of which the jury are drawn by lot.

But a property qualification is not in all cases indispensable for a juryman. Public servants, unless they are in the army, in the police, or in the magistrature, and with the exception of officials of the first four classes, who are exempted,

can be chosen; likewise all local elective officers, especially peasants, such as the judges of the Canton Courts, the *elders* in the commune and the cantons. The net result is that the jury is mixed and democratic, and as a rule contains a leaven of peasants and minor public servants, and sometimes, indeed, consists almost wholly of men from the lower classes. Here, for instance, is a list of the professions followed by the members of the jury before whom the Beiliss ritual murder case was heard at Kiev. This jury was exceptionally below the average of educational standard.*

1. Peasant, agricultural labourer.
2. Peasant, cab-driver.
3. Minor public servant employed in postal service.
4. Minor public servant employed in postal service.
5. Peasant, employed in a wine warehouse.
6. Peasant, agricultural labourer.
7. Townsman, employed at railway station.
8. Peasant, agricultural labourer.

* It has been widely affirmed that there has never been a peasant jury in Kiev before.

9. Secretary at governor's office, assistant of the revisor in the auditor's office.
10. Peasant, agricultural labourer.
11. Peasant, controller in a town tramway.
12. Burgher, small householder.

The above list, whether it is below average or not—and it was said at the time to be startlingly below the average—shows more or less the nature of a Russian jury in a small town. There is generally a larger dose of a more educated element, but the elements which appear in this list will probably be present in most juries in varying quantities. It should be noted, however, that the composition of the lists from which the jury is drawn is very much in the hands of the local authorities. In a big town a jury exclusively composed of peasants is an exception, and a very rare one.

Hence the peculiar character of the Russian jury, about which much has been written and much is being written.

Its chief characteristic is its leniency, its indulgence, its tendency to acquit. And on this account there existed, and there still exists in

some quarters in Russia, a movement against the jury as an institution, which bases its disapproval on the reluctance of the jury to condemn. But it is improbable that such a movement will ever have a practical result. The disadvantages of tampering in any way with trial by jury are too obvious. Many characteristic stories exist in Russian literature, and a still greater number float about in the flotsam and jetsam of current talk, illustrating by striking instances the peculiar psychology of the Russian jury.

It is said that a jury once returned a verdict of "innocent, with extenuating circumstances." Garin, the author, tells how his house was once set on fire by a peasant, and how without much difficulty he collected overwhelming evidence against a particular peasant for deliberate arson. The peasant was tried before a jury of peasants in the Canton Court. His guilt was clearly proved. Nobody had any doubt but that the verdict would be "guilty." The peasants on the jury did not deny the prisoner's guilt, but were of the opinion that six years' penal servitude—the sentence the prisoner would have received for arson—was disproportionately heavy.

"Two years in prison," they reasoned—wrote the foreman, narrating the case to Garin—"would be enough to instil wisdom in him; but to send him to penal servitude is too much. In what are his wife and children guilty? What will they do without a bread-winner? . . . Their final argument was that it was a fine day, and the sun was shining spring-like; how could they ruin a man on such a fine day? They were sorry for the gentleman, but still more sorry for the orphans and the wife. Nobody was ever ruined on account of a fire. It was God's will, and must be accepted as such."

"It was only afterwards," says Garin, the sufferer in the incident, and the teller of the story, "that it became clear to me that what from our point of view may seem the greatest injustice is from the point of view of the people the expression of the highest justice in the world." Immediately after the incident, Garin was obliged to leave the village where it occurred. He revisited the place two years later. "I was at once met," he writes, "by a deputation of peasants, whose spokesman made me a kind of speech in which he said that the peasants were very

glad to see me; and that they were very glad for my sake that the prisoner had been acquitted; that the Lord had not allowed me to be burdened with a sin, in interfering with what was not my business but God's—the hounding of criminals. 'The Lord saved thee from sin,' they said to me; 'all the good which thou didst us has remained to thee, and has not been in vain. The Lord punished them.'" And finally he tells how the peasants narrated the bad end the criminals had come to, taking it as a matter of course that such things belonged to the sphere of Providence, and not to that of man.

The story is characteristic. I could quote many others of the same kind—stories in some cases which are startling in their unexpectedness, and in the difference of the point of view from that prevailing in other classes and in other countries. But strange as this point of view may seem, it will generally be found that there is in it a basis of common sense and an element of sound fairness. The Russian peasant juryman is indifferent to legal subtleties, and often quite unaffected by forensic evidence, which he looks on as a thing made to order,

bought and sold. He will judge by his conscience, and according to his own code of morals, which, if indulgent, is none the less definite.

A friend of mine was once serving on a jury in St. Petersburg. The prisoner was found guilty of an odious crime, but the jury agreed to a verdict of "guilty, with extenuating circumstances." My friend asked one man, who was a peasant, how there could be extenuating circumstances in such a case, to which he answered, "I am not quite sure he did it." If the principle be a just one, that it is better that a guilty man should go free than that an innocent man should be condemned, then the chief accusation made against the characteristics of the Russian jury breaks down. A Russian jury will be almost certain to give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt. When the ritual murder case began at Kiev, it was pointed out with dismay in several quarters that it was absurd to try such a case before an uneducated jury—that a jury of that kind could not possibly appreciate complicated questions of medical *expertise*, and all the arcana of folklore and talmudic tradition and interpretations of Hebrew texts, which played a large part

in the trial. But when the trial was over, those who interviewed the jurymen said that the jury had paid no attention to all that ; the visit to the site where the body was found was the first thing which affected their opinion ; the eloquence of the able lawyers engaged on both sides did not influence them, as they said lawyers were "hired;" but the conduct of one of the jury, who spent a large part of his time in prayer, impressed them ; and finally they gave a verdict of " not guilty," which was the result of the workings of their conscience.

This is all the more remarkable in that they very probably took the existence of ritual murders as a matter of course ; but however this may have been, they realized that they had to find Beiliss guilty or not guilty, and they found him not guilty. A jury chosen from the most cultivated classes of Russia could not have shown more sense, and—as this case had raised political questions and racial passions just as the Dreyfus case did—had such a jury been infected by partisanship or political or religious fanaticism, it is quite possible that things might not have gone so well for the accused. For whereas the jury thus con-

stituted might have been liberal, it might just as well have been reactionary and anti-Semite. Of course the Russian jury has its drawbacks—it may, if consisting of the lower classes, very likely look upon certain forms of fraud as rather a good joke; it may be over-indulgent to certain crimes; but if the principle I mentioned just now is sound, that it is better for the guilty to escape than that the innocent should suffer, then these drawbacks are amply compensated for.

There is another point to remember: by heightening the educational average of a Russian jury, you would probably increase rather than diminish its leniency; because this leniency is due to a great extent to the inborn indulgence, tolerance, and humaneness of the Russian people.

Juries drawn exclusively from the *intelligentsia* are said to be still more indulgent than peasant juries. Opinions differ on this point. A Russian friend of mine tells me he believes the peasant jury the more tolerant, in spite of what he has heard, and in spite of his own experience to the contrary; but it is probably a question of the nature of the crime—the *intelligentsia* being more severe for certain crimes which the peasants would

condone as quite natural (say, certain forms of forgery and violence), and the peasants, on the other hand, dealing severely with a crime towards which the *intelligentsia* would be more leniently disposed. But the main point is that a Russian jury, whatever its composition, is fundamentally indulgent. It is far more indulgent than a jury chosen from any other European country. I remember being in St. Petersburg just after the Crippen case, and hearing it discussed among educated people in reactionary circles. These people could not understand how it was possible to hang a man on such slender evidence. Even if the evidence had been abundant, the punishment seemed to them too severe, but on slender evidence the sentence seemed to them monstrous.

This leads us to the question of the punishments which the Russian law can inflict.

The death penalty exists only for attempts on the life of the Emperor or members of the imperial family, forcible attempts to dethrone the Emperor, and certain cases of high treason.

The death penalty was abolished by the Empress Elisabeth in 1753. It is true that when this was done it was rather the name than any-

thing else which was abolished, since as long as flogging continued with the *knut* *, a leather whip which was as deadly as the cat-of-nine-tails, a sentence of over thirty blows (thirty-five blows was the maximum allowed during the last years of flogging) was enough to prove fatal.

Flogging with the *knut* was abolished by the Emperor Nicholas I. during the first year of his reign (1825). During the reign of Alexander II., from 1855 to 1876, only one man was executed on the scaffold—Karakosov, who made an attempt on the Emperor's life. From 1866 to 1903 only 114 men suffered the penalty of death throughout the Russian empire. These statistics were read out and discussed in the Council of Empire in July 1906 by M. Tagantsev, a celebrated Russian legist, who pointed out that, in contradistinction to this leniency, during 1906, from January to June, 108 people had been condemned to death under martial law, and ninety had been executed, not counting those who had been killed without trial.

When the Duma was dissolved in July 1906,

* The word *knut* is the ordinary word for whip.

and P. A. Stolypin took the reins of government in his hands, martial law continued; drum-head courts-martial were held all over the country, and the number of people executed during 1907 and 1908 was very great.

But it must be remembered that during this period the country was in a state of anarchy. Acts of terrorism were being committed almost daily by the social-revolutionary party, and acts of hooliganism and robbery under arms by the criminal classes, who imitated and adopted the methods of the revolutionaries. A vicious circle of lawless crime and indiscriminate retaliation seemed to have closed round Russian life, so that during all this period the executions were to the crimes in a proportion of about one to three. It should also be remembered that during certain phases of this epoch many parts of the country were virtually in a state of civil war.

In any case, whether Stolypin's policy was defensible or not—and theoretically it was indefensible—he was successful with the help of the reaction that came about in public opinion in putting an end to the anarchy, and after a time things began to quiet down; drum-head court-

martial ceased, martial law gave way to "states of reinforced protection," and the country gradually gained its normal state, and capital punishment has once more become rarer, although it cannot yet be said to be non-existent, since, in virtue of states of reinforced protection (*Ysilenaya Okhrana*), and by military courts, during 1912, 335 people were condemned to death, and 124 were executed.

In 1913, 143 were sentenced and 33 were executed (the large number of persons reprieved being due during this year to an amnesty given on the occasion of the tercentenary of the imperial family). The majority of crimes for which sentences of death were passed are evasion from prisons, riots in prison, or attacks on prison authorities.

The criminal penalties meted out by Russian law are :—

(*a*) Penal servitude for life, or for terms ranging from four years to twenty years.

(*b*) Imprisonment from four to six years with consequent loss of civil rights.

(*c*) Deportation to remote parts of the empire for settlement.

Formerly all convicts were deported, but now some of them serve their terms in prisons in the local Russian provinces.

Besides these criminal penalties, there exist also what are called corrective penalties, which include various degrees of punishment, ranging from reprimands, fines, and imprisonment from three days to three months, at the bottom of the scale, to sentences of one to four years with loss of civil privileges at the top of the scale. Among these corrective penalties is what is called fortress imprisonment for one year four months to four years with loss of rights, and imprisonments for four weeks to one year four months without loss of rights. This punishment is usually applied to delinquencies of a political or of a literary character.

Certain crimes are far less severely punished in Russia than they are in England. A murderer, for instance, as a rule will receive a sentence of twelve years' penal servitude. In some cases, if there are extenuating circumstances, if he acted under provocation, he will probably be acquitted altogether. Again, there are cases of murder which have been punished by not more than two years' imprisonment.

Had Beiliss been found guilty he would not have been hanged—as was stated in some of the London newspapers—but the maximum sentence he could have received (for murder of a child accompanied by violence) would have been penal servitude for life.

We have seen that there are in Russia two tribunals—the Divisional Court and the High Court, and that the High Court deals chiefly with political offences, or with the delinquencies of officials. Cases heard by the High Court are tried either by the Bench, or by a special tribunal consisting of judges and what are called "class representatives." These consist of the marshal of the nobility of the government, a mayor from the town, and the elder of the canton (a peasant). Appeals against verdicts of the Divisional Court in cases which were tried without a jury can be made to the High Court, which can modify the sentence, and a final appeal can be made to the Senate. In cases which are tried by a jury no appeal can be made on points of fact; but an appeal can be made on points of law to the Senate, which can either confirm the sentence, or order the case to be retried either before the

same tribunal, or before a tribunal exercising a similar jurisdiction. The verdict in cases tried by jury cannot therefore be modified, but it can be cancelled and quashed.

The Senate in these cases corresponds to the French *Cour de Cassation.*

The Russian Bar came into existence as a profession in 1864. Any one of a certain education and standing is admitted to plead in a criminal case in Russia, unless the case be political. As regards civil cases, the privilege is limited to the right of appearing before a petty tribunal three times a year. This is an exception to the rule that in a civil case only sworn advocates or "private attorneys"* are entitled to plead. Professional lawyers receive their training at the university, and when, by passing the necessary examination, they are in possession of a certificate or degree, they are obliged to pass through a preliminary stage of five years' "devilling;" then after a formal examination in legal procedure, they become full-blown "sworn lawyers" (*prisiazhnye povierenye*).

* Private attorneys (*chastnye povierenye*) plead before a specific court from which they have received a special licence. They are not required to take a university degree.

The Russian Bar has more than justified its existence. Since it came into being in 1864 it has produced a number of most remarkable men, remarkable as lawyers as well as orators. Lately, since the creation of the Duma, its influence has made itself felt in politics, since many of the members of the Duma who have played a leading part in politics have been lawyers. The lawyers naturally had the habit of speech, and were often trained orators, so that as soon as an opportunity arose for their peculiar gifts to have free play, they were bound to come to the front on both sides of the House. Among the members of the Duma who have attained to prominence are such men as Plevako, Maklakov, and that of the late M. Muromtsev, the president of the first Duma, who was one of the most celebrated lawyers of the University of Moscow, and one of the brightest ornaments of the Russian Civil Bar.

Generally speaking, of all the reforms carried out by Alexander II., that of the judicial system —leaving out of account the emancipation of the serfs, which was the *sine qua non* of all reform, and without which all other reforms were use-

less—was the most greatly acclaimed. In the first place, because the old system of justice had been so bad; and in the second place, because the new system proved to be a real success.

During the period of reaction which set in in the reign of Alexander III., and during the first years of the reign of the present Emperor, under the reactionary administration of Plehve, the Bar still retained its independence; and during this time, it was at the Bar, and at the Bar only, that independence of thought and speech could be said to exist.

It must be said that the revolutionary movement had a bad effect on it: firstly, because many of its Liberal members were suspended; and secondly because the Government, after the revolutionary movement, did everything it could to diminish the moral independence of the judges, and to make them as reactionary as possible, and in some respects this was successful. The result of this policy is being felt now in political or semi-political cases. But this is probably only a transitional and temporary state of reaction, following on the disturbance of the revolutionary movement, and it will remedy itself

automatically in the course of time, if the quiet state of things that now exists continues; but if this proves not to be the case, if the sparks of discontent suddenly burst into flame, then circumstances of a different kind will restore to the Bar its ancient independence. Yet as things are now, and taking all drawbacks, all temporary embarrassments and hindrances, and all reactionary influences into account; with every disadvantage under which it may be labouring, the Russian Bar must still be acknowledged an admirable institution of which any country should feel justly proud.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FASCINATION OF RUSSIA.

GOGOL, the greatest of Russian humorists, has a passage in one of his books, where in exile he cries out to his country to reveal the secret of her fascination.

"What is the mysterious and inscrutable power which lies hidden in you?" he exclaims. "Why does your aching and melancholy song echo unceasingly in one's ears? Russia, what do you want of me? What is there between you and me?" This question has often been repeated, not only by Russians in exile, but by foreigners who have lived in Russia.

The country is so devoid of the more obvious and unmistakable signs of glamour and attraction. As Gogol says, not here are those astonishing miracles of nature which are made still more startling by the triumphs of art.

In Russia there are no

> "Congesta manu prœruptis oppida saxis,
> Fluminaque antiquos subterlabentia muros";

no

> "old palaces and towers
> Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
> All overgrown with azure moss and flowers";

no "noble wreck in ruinous perfection," where "the stars twinkle through the loops of time"; no "castle, precipice-encurled in a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine"; no "rose-red city half as old as time."

There are none of those spots were nature, art, time, and history have combined to catch the heart with a charm in which beauty, association, and even decay are indistinguishably mingled; where art has added the picturesque to the beauty of nature; and where time has made magic the handiwork of art; and where history has peopled the spot with countless phantoms, and cast over everything the strangeness and the glamour of her spell.

Such places you will find in France and in England, all over Italy, in Spain, and in Greece, but not in Russia. Russia is a country of colon-

ists, where life has been a continual struggle against the rigour and asperity of the climate, and whose political history is the record of a long and desperate struggle against adverse circumstances; whose oldest city was sacked and burnt just at the moment when it was beginning to flourish; whose first capital was destroyed by fire in 1812; whose second capital dates from the seventeenth century; whose stone houses are rare in the country, and whose wooden houses are perpetually being destroyed by fire.

A country of long winters and fierce summers, of rolling plains, uninterrupted by mountains and unvariegated by valleys.

And yet the charm is there. It is a fact which is felt by quantities of people of different nationalities and races; and it is difficult, if you live in Russia, to escape it, and once you have felt it you will never be free from it. The aching, melancholy song, which Gogol says wanders from sea to sea throughout the length and breadth of the land, will for ever echo in your heart, and haunt the recesses of your memory.

It is impossible to analyze charm, for if charm could be analyzed it would cease to exist; and

it is difficult to define the charm which is attached to places where there is so little of that startlingly obvious beauty of nature or art whose appeal is instantaneous; where there is no playground of romance, and no abodes haunted by poetic or historical ghosts and echoes.

But to those who have never been to Russia, and who will perhaps never go there, Turgeniev's descriptions of the country will give an idea of this unique and peculiar magic. For instance, the description of the summer night, when on the plain the children tell each other bogey stories; or the description of that other July evening, when out of the twilight from a long way off on the plain, a child's voice is heard calling, "Antropka-a-a," and Antropka answers, "Wha-a-a-a-a-at;" and far away out of the immensity comes the answering voice, "Come ho-ome; because daddy wants to whip you."

Turgeniev will afford to those who wish to travel in their armchair magical glimpses of just those particular episodes, pictures, incidents, sayings and doings, touches of human nature, phases of landscape, shades of atmosphere, which constitute the charm of Russian life.

Whereas those who will actually travel in Russia itself will recognize not only that what he writes is true to nature, but that incidents such as those he records and causes to live again by means of his incomparable art are a frequent and common experience to those who have eyes to see.

The picturesqueness peculiar to countries rich in a long tradition of art, and in varied and conflicting historical associations, may be absent in Russia; but this does not mean that beauty is absent, and its manifestations are often all the more striking from their lack of obviousness.

I was favoured with such a glimpse this summer. I was staying in a small wooden house in Central Russia, not far from a railway, but isolated from all other houses, and at a fair distance from a village. The harvest was nearly done. The heat was sweltering. Everything was parched and dry. The walls and ceilings were black with flies. One had no wish to venture out of doors until the evening.

The small garden of the house, which was gay with asters and sweet peas, was surrounded by birch trees, with here and there a fir tree in their midst.

Opposite the little house a broad pathway, flanked on each side by a row of tall birch trees, lead to the margin of the garden, which ended in a rather steep grass slope, and a valley, or rather a dip, likewise wooded, and on the other side of the dip, on a level with the garden, there was a pathway half hidden by trees; so that from the house, if you looked straight in front of you, you saw a broad path, with birch trees on each side of it, forming as it were a proscenium for a distant view of trees; and if anybody walked along the pathway on the other side of the dip, although you saw no road, you could see their figures in outline against the sky, as though they were walking across the back of a stage.

Just as the cool of the evening began to fall, out of the distance came a rhythmical song, very high, and ending on a note that seemed to last for ever, piercingly clear and clean. Then the music came a little nearer, and one could distinguish first a solo chanting a phrase, and then a chorus taking it up, and finally, solo and chorus became one, reaching a climax on one high note, which went on and on, getting purer and stronger, without any seeming effort, until it eventually died away.

The tone of the voices was so high, so pure, and at the same time so peculiar, so strong and unusual, that it was difficult at first to decide whether the voices were high tenor men's voices, womanly sopranos, or boyish trebles. They were quite unlike, both in range and quality, the voices of women you usually hear in Russian villages. The music drew nearer, and it filled the air with a stateliness and a calm indescribable. And presently, in the distance, beyond the dip between the trees, and in the centre of the natural stage made by the garden, I saw against the sky figures of women walking slowly in the sunset, and singing as they walked, carrying their scythes and their wooden rakes with them; and once again the high, pure phrase began, to be repeated by the chorus; and once again chorus and solo melted together in a high and infinitely long-drawn-out note, which seemed to swell like the sound of some crystal clarion, to grow purer and more single, and to go on and on, until it ended suddenly and sharply, like a frieze ends. And this song seemed to proclaim rest after toil, and satisfaction for labour accomplished. It was like a hymn of praise, a

broad benediction, a grace sung for the end of the day, the end of the summer, the end of the harvest. It seemed the very soul and spirit of the breathless August evening.

Slowly the women walked past and disappeared into the trees once more. The glimpse was but momentary, yet it sufficed to conjure up a whole train of thoughts and pictures of rites, ritual, and custom—of pagan ceremonies older than the gods, of rustic worship and rural festival older than all creeds. And as another verse of what sounded like a primeval harvest hymn began, the brief vision of the reapers, erect, stately, full of dignity, sacerdotal and majestic in the dress and with the attributes of toil, added to the impression made by the high quality and pure concent of the singing, and one felt as if one had had a vision of another phase of time, a glimpse into an older and remoter world—older than Virgil, older than Romulus, older than Demeter—a world where the spring, the summer, and the autumn, harvest time and sowing, the gathering of fruits, and the vintage, were the gods; a gleam from the golden age, a breath from the morning and the springtide of the world.

The place seemed to become a temple in the quiet light of the evening—august, sacred, and calm — and the procession of those stately figures, diminutive in the distance, was like the design on an archaic vase or frieze; and the music seemed to seal a sacrament, to be the initiation into some immemorial secret, into some far-off mystery—who knows, perhaps the Mystery of Eleusis ?—or older mysteries, of which Eleusis was but the far-distant offspring? The music passed, the singing died away in the distance, and one felt inclined to say,—

> "Is it a vision or a waking dream ?
> Fled is that music—do I wake or sleep ? "

When I say that the singing evoked thoughts of Greece, the thing is less fantastic than it seems. In the first place, in the songs of the Russian peasants the Greek modes are still in use—the Dorian, the Hypo-dorian, the Lydian, the Hypo-phrygian. "*La musique, telle qu'elle était pratiquée en Russie au moyen âge*" (writes M. Soubier in his *History of Russian Music*), "*tenait à la tradition des religions et des mœurs paiennes.*" And in the secular as well as in the

ecclesiastical music of Russia there is an element of influence which is purely Hellenic.

It turned out that the particular singers I heard on that evening were not local singers, but a guild of women reapers who had come from the government of Tula to work during the harvest. Their singing, although the form and kind of song was familiar to me, was quite different in quality from any that I had heard before; and the impression made by it is unforgettable.

If the aspect of nature in Russia is, broadly speaking, monotonous and uniform, this does not mean that beauty manifests itself infrequently. Not only magic moments occur in the most unpromising surroundings, but beauty is to be found in Russian nature and landscape at all times and all seasons in a multitude of shapes.

Personally I know nothing more striking than a long drive in the evening twilight at harvest time over the immense hedgeless rolling fields in Russia, through stretches of golden wheat and rye variegated with millet, still green and not yet turned to the bronze colour it takes later; when you drive for miles over monotonous and yet ever-varying rolling fields, and when you see the

cranes, settling for a moment, and then flying off into space.

Later in the twilight, great continents of dove-like lilac clouds float in the east, and the west is suffused with the dusty and golden afterglow of the sunset, and the half-reaped corn and the spaces of stubble are burnished and glow in the heat, and smouldering fires of weeds burn here and there; and as you reach a homestead you will perhaps see by the threshing machine a crowd of dark men and women still at their work, and in the glow from the flame of a wooden fire and the shadow of the dusk, in the smoke of the engine and the dust of the chaff, they have a Rembrandt-like power; and the feeling of space, breadth, and air and immensity grows upon one; and the earth seems to grow larger, and the sky to grow deeper, and the spirit is lifted, stretched, and magnified.

The Russian poets have celebrated more frequently the spring and winter—the brief spring with the intense green of the birch trees, the uncrumpling fern, the woods carpeted with lilies of the valley, the lilac bushes, and the nightingale, which in Russia is the bird of spring,

later the briar, which flowers in great profusion; and the winter with its fields of snow scintillating in the sunshine, when the transparent woods are black against the whiteness, or, when covered with snow and frozen, they form an enchanted fabric, a fantastic tracery of powdered shapes, gleaming against the stainless blue, or when, after a night of thaw, the brown branches emerge once more covered with airy threads and drops of sparkling dew.

Wonderful, too, is the sunset and twilight of the winter evening after the first snow has fallen in December, when the new moon rises above and is poised, like a silver sail, or a gem, in a sea of azure that is suffused, as it grows nearer the earth, with a rosy blush. The white rays of the new moon looking down from the sky flood the sheets of snow with radiance, and lend them an intenser purity; and lastly, with a tinge of cold blue in their whiteness, they show up in bold relief the wooden houses, the red roofs, and all the furniture of toil; and these practical and prosaic household things — these objects and attributes of everyday life—assume a strange

largeness and darkness as they loom between the snow and the faintly blushing and lustrous sky, as unreal and portentous as the conjured visions of a magician.

The beauty and exhilaration of winter has been well sung by the Russian poets, and the long drives in sledges under a leaden sky, to the monotonous tinkle of the sledge bell, and the whistling blizzard with its demons that lead the horses astray in the night; and as for the spring, whose invasion after the melting of the snows is so sudden, whose green robes are so startling in their intensity, and whose conquest of nature is so sudden and so swift, it has evoked some of the finest pages of Russian literature, in prose as well as in verse.

But there will be some who will enjoy more than anything in Russia the summer afternoons on some river, where the flat banks are covered with oak trees, ash, and willow, and thick undergrowth, and where every now and then perch rise to the surface to catch flies, and the kingfishers skim over the surface from reach to reach. Perhaps you will take a boat and row past islands of rushes, and a network of water-

lilies, to where the river broadens, and you reach a great sheet of water flanked by a weir and a mill. The trees are reflected in the glassy surface, and nothing breaks the stillness but the grumbling of the mill and the cries of the children bathing.

And then, if you are near a village, all through the summer night you will hear song answering song, and the brisk rhythm of the accordion; or to the interminable humming, buzzing burden of the three-stringed *balalaika*, verse will succeed to verse of an apparently tireless song, and the end of each verse will seem to beget another and give a keener zest to the next; and the song will go on and on, as if the singer were intoxicated by the sound of his own music.

But the peculiar manifestations of the beauty of nature in a flat and uniform country are not enough to account for the overwhelming fascination of Russia. That is a part of it, but that is not all. And against that in the other scale you must put dirt, squalor, misery, slovenliness, disorder, and uninspiring wooden provincial towns, the dusty or sodden roads, the frequent gray skies, the long and heavy sameness.

The *advocatus diaboli* has a strong case. He could, and often does, draw up an indictment proving to you that Russia is a country with a disagreeable climate—an arid summer producing uncertain harvests which sometimes result in starvation, an intolerably long winter, a damp and unhealthy spring, and a still more unhealthy autumn: a country whose capital is built on a swamp, where there are next to no decent roads, where the provincial towns are overgrown villages, squalid, squatting, dismal, devoid of natural beauty, and unredeemed by art: a country where internal communications off the big railway lines are complicated and bad; where on the best lines accidents happen owing to sleepers being rotten; where the cost of living is high, and the expense of life out of all proportion to the quality of the goods supplied; where labour is dear, bad, and slow; where the sanitary conditions in which the great mass of the population live are deplorable; where every kind of disease, including plague, is rampant; where medical aid and appliances are inadequate; where the poor people are backward and ignorant, and the middle class slack and slovenly; and where

progress is deliberately checked and impeded in every possible way: a country governed by chance, where all forms of administration are arbitrary, uncertain, and dilatory; where all forms of business are cumbersome and burdened with red tape; and where bribery is an indispensable factor in business and administrative life: a country burdened by a vast official population, which is on the whole lazy, venal, and incompetent: a country where political liberty and the elementary rights of citizenship do not exist; where even the programmes of concerts, and all foreign newspapers and literature, are censored; where the freedom of the Press is hampered by petty annoyances, and editors are constantly fined and sometimes imprisoned; where freedom of conscience is hampered: a country where the only political argument which can be used by a private person is dynamite, and where political assassination is the only form of civic courage: a country of misrule: a country where there is every licence and no law; where everybody acts regardless of his neighbour; where you can do everything and criticize nothing; and where the only way to show you have the courage of your convic-

tions is to spend years in prison: a country of extremes, of moral laxity, and extravagant self-indulgence; a people without self-control and without discipline, always finding fault, always criticizing, but never acting; jealous of anything or anybody who emerges from the ranks and rises superior to the average; looking upon all individual originality and distinction with suspicion; a people slavish to the dead level of mediocrity and the stereotyped bureaucratic pattern; a people which has all the faults of the Orient and none of its austerer virtues, and none of its dignity and self-control; a nation of ineffectual rebels under the direction of a band of time-serving officials: a country where those in power are in perpetual fear, and where influence may come from any quarter—where nothing is too absurd to happen: a country, as was said in the Duma, of unlimited possibilities. I do not think the *advocatus diaboli* can put the case stronger than that. He would call as his witnesses the greatest Russian writers of the past, and the most prominent Russians of the present in political life, art, literature, and science. He would call countless

moralists and satirists, and prove that the Russian God is the God of all that is topsy-turvy, and of everything which is in its wrong place and as it should not be. And he would laugh at all the reformers, and tell them to reform themselves; and he would end his indictment with a smile, and murmur, "*Doux pays!*" Of course the case of the *advocatus diaboli* is as unfair as possible, otherwise it would not be the case of the *advocatus diaboli*. And the defence could make a strong counter-case refuting some of these statements, qualifying all of them.

But the defence can do better than that. It can point out that the very strength of the case of the *advocatus diaboli* constitutes its weakness; because if you say to him: "I know all that, and you can make your case still stronger, if you choose. I admit all that; and in spite of all, and in some cases even because of it, Russia has for me an indescribable fascination; in spite of all that, I love the country, and admire and respect its people."

What can he answer to that? Nothing, I think. If you admit the faults, and add that

they seem to you the negative results of positive qualities so valuable as to outweigh them altogether, the case of the *advocatus diaboli* breaks down altogether. That is my point of view about Russia. I perceive countless faults and drawbacks, some which may be the fortuitous result of bad government, and only temporary, and which will disappear, as other worse things have already disappeared, with the march of time; and others which may be innate and radical—the result of original sin, and the way in which the Russian character expresses its indispensable dose of original sin, and inseparable from it and ineradicable. There may be many more which I do not even perceive. But this does not affect me, because I have realized and experienced the result of other qualities and virtues which seem to me greater and more important than all the possible faults put together, and magnified to any extent; and the net result of this is that the country has for me an overpowering charm, and the people an indescribable attraction.

And the charm exercised by the country as a whole is partly due to the country itself, and

partly to the mode of life lived there, and to the nature of the people. The qualities that do exist, and whose benefit I have experienced, seem to me the most precious of all qualities; and the virtues the most important of all virtues; and the glimpses of beauty the rarest in kind; the songs and the music the most haunting and most heart-searching; the poetry nearest to nature and man; the human charity nearest to God.

This is perhaps the secret of the whole matter, that the Russian soul is filled with a human Christian charity which is warmer in kind and intenser in degree, and expressed with a greater simplicity and sincerity, than I have met with in any other people anywhere else; and it is this quality being behind everything else which gives charm to Russian life, however squalid the circumstances of it may be, which gives poignancy to its music, sincerity and simplicity to its religion, manners, intercourse, music, singing, verse, art, acting—in a word, to its art, its life, and its faith.

Never did I realize this so much as once when I was driving on a cold and damp December

evening in St. Petersburg in a cab. It was dark, and I was driving along the quays from one end of the town to the other. For a long time I drove in silence, but after a while I happened to make some remark to the cabman about the weather. He answered gloomily that the weather was bad and everything else too. For some time we drove on again in silence, and then some other stray remark or question of mine elicited from him the fact that he had had bad luck that day in the matter of a fine. The matter was a trivial one, but somehow or other my interest was half aroused, and I got him to tell me the story, which was a case of ordinary bad luck and nothing very serious; but when he had told it, he gave such a profound sigh that I asked whether it was that which was still weighing upon him. Then he said "No," and slowly began to tell me a story of a great catastrophe which had just befallen him. He possessed a little land and a cottage in the country not far from St. Petersburg. His house had been burnt. It was true he had insured, but the insurance was not sufficient to make any sensible difference. He had two sons, one of whom went to

school, and one who had some employment somewhere in the provinces. The catastrophe of the fire had simply upset everything. All his belongings had perished. He could no longer send his boy to school. His other son, who was in the country, had written to say he was engaged to be married, and had asked his consent, advice, and approval. "He has written twice," said the cabman, "and I keep silence (*i ya molchu*). What can I answer?" I cannot give any idea of the strength, simplicity, and poignancy of the tale as it came, hammered out slowly, with pauses between each sentence, and a kind of biblical and dignified simplicity of utterance and purity of idiom which is the precious privilege of the poor in Russia. The words seemed to be torn out from the bottom of his heart. He made no complaint; there was no grievance, no whine in the story. He just stated the bald facts with a simplicity which was overwhelming. And in spite of all, his faith in God, and his consent to the will of Providence, was unshaken, certain, and sublime. This was three years ago. I have forgotten the details of the story, which were

many; but the impression remains of having been face to face with a human soul, stripped and naked, and a human soul in the grip of a tragedy, as dignified as that of Prometheus, as touching as that of King Lear, and as full of faith as that of Job. And this experience, which brought one in touch with the divine, is one which, I submit, could only in such circumstances occur in Russia.

When I say that for me Russia has a unique and overwhelming charm, I mean that for me this charm arises from my love of the Russian people; and this love is not a predilection for the curious, the picturesque, the remote, and the unusual, but the expression, the homage, the acknowledgment, the admiration of those qualities which I believe to be the "captain jewels" in the crown of human nature.

"Those foreigners," wrote a Russian journalist not long ago, "who come to Russia and rave about the people, nevertheless in their hearts despise us. They admire in us qualities which they regard as primeval and barbarian; they look upon us as good-natured and pleasant savages." I should like to assure that writer,

or any other Russian who chances to read these pages, that, whatever people may think, what I love and admire in the Russian people is nothing barbaric, picturesque, or exotic, but something eternal, universal, and great—namely, their love of man and their faith in God. And this seems to me of a kind and of a degree that makes all dissection of vices and enumeration of failings, all carping criticism and captious analysis, an idle business. It may be a profitable employment for the Russians to blame and to criticize themselves, and it is one in which they are constantly occupied. It is less important in the case of a foreigner writing for foreigners, and on a country about which much prejudice has existed in the past and many falsehoods have been written; for him it is important to recognize and to point out the sunshine of which his countrymen are ignorant, and not to analyze the spots on the sun. For it is the people who admire whose observation is profitable, and it is those who see and feel the sunshine who feel and see the truth; for the sunshine and not the sun-spots is the important fact about the sun.

Nevertheless, the expression of an admiration for certain qualities in a foreign people is always a delicate task. And often foreigners are justly irritated for being praised for the qualities which they least want to be praised for. Nothing is more irritating than the condescending tone which some people adopt in praising certain elements which meet with their approval in foreign countries. When, for instance, Anglo-Saxons say to the Latin races: "Keep to your past; keep to your superstitions, your relics, your ruins, and your associations; remain artistic and picturesque; but keep your hands off battleships, aeroplanes, telephones, tramcars, and steam ploughs; leave those practical things to us. You cannot deal with them. You are charming as you are. Do not try to be modern, you spoil the whole effect by doing so." This is often the attitude of people to the Spaniards and the Italians, and it is a maddening attitude. Or to the Irish they say: "You are amusing, why should you be competent? Why should you try and deal with the serious business of politics?" And such talk to an Irishman is more than maddening. Or supposing foreigners were to say to

the English, to the countrymen of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Constable: "Don't bother about writing poetry or painting pictures, stick to your counters and your cotton-mills, you people of shopkeepers; leave art to us," we should resent it. This attitude of mind arises from what a French writer calls "*un optimisme béat*"—a sort of open-mouthed, weak-chinned satisfaction with oneself and all things, which is hopeless and infuriating. And when this attitude is blent with a tincture of rancid unction or a dose of gushing and indulgent sentimentalism—when, for instance, people condescend to patronisingly rave about the ritual of such an institution as the Catholic Church it is more intolerable still.

It is for this reason I wish to make myself quite clear on this point. If, as I hope, I have escaped the pitfall of giving the impression that Russians are interesting as exotic and barbaric specimens, as thinly-civilized savages, I none the less wish not to incur the suspicion that, in admiring in them the qualities of the heart, I am overlooking in them the qualities of the

head, or assuming the absence of sterner stuff, and of the tougher and more practical virtues. I do not wish it to be thought that I am saying to them, "Be good, sweet child; let those who will be clever." It is not necessary to point out their cleverness and all it stands for. We all know they are clever. I wish to point out that I think they are good as well; and that their goodness is more important than their cleverness, because in general goodness is a rarer as well as a greater thing than cleverness. This may be a truism, but modern life has given to most truisms the appearance of startling paradoxes.

Take, on the one hand, the most striking examples among examples of energy and practical achievements—of men, deeds, and facts—which the Latin and Anglo-Saxon races can show, and Russia need not fear to hold her own.

Take any one of the faults which Russian critics hold up as the curse of the country, and it is easy to show that though the accusation may be true, it is not the whole truth; that the contrary is true also, and the exceptions startling. Russians, for instance, often single out laziness and the want of practical energy as a national

failing. Well and good; but the defence of Sevastopol, the creation of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and the transport of troops over a single line during war time, are examples of abnormal energy in the domain of achievement; and in the persons of Peter the Great, Suvorov, and Skobeliev, Russia has given to the world examples of terrific and explosive energy. Stern stuff must exist somewhere in the Russian character, or else the Russian empire would not be there to testify to the fact. The Russian empire is the result of something, and it is there.

On the other hand, take those crying faults which Russian critics single out and deplore as being the sorest plague-spots and the weakest points in the national life and character, and you will find it easy to match them in the other countries of Europe and in America. And you will often find that what is attributed to the evils of a particular form of government is very often really the result of original sin, and common to all countries under different forms and names.

But my point is that while, as far as the general category of faults and qualities, virtues and

vices is concerned, the Russians are on a par with other countries, and no worse if no better, they have, *ceteris paribus*, a peculiar and unique gift of goodness and faith in the nature of their people which is difficult to match in any other country, although you will find something like it in America.

That is why I have dwelt less on that stern stuff and those tough and stubborn qualities which must be common to all great nations, and whose existence naturally and inevitably follows from the very fact of a nation being a great nation. Such qualities must be taken for granted. Did they not exist, there would be no such thing as the Russian empire.

That is why I disregard them here, and have chosen to dwell more on those qualities which I believe to be peculiar to Russia, and which I believe to be also a source of greatness. I happen also to think these latter qualities to be more important in themselves.

I hope now that I have made it plain that it is on account of a humble admiration for these special qualities, which by no means excludes a serious recognition and respect for all other

general qualities, and not on account of any fantastic whim, condescending self-complacency, or hypocritical sense of superiority, that with regard to Russia I echo the words which R. L. Stevenson once addressed to the deaf ear of a French novelist: "*J'ai beau admirer les autres de toute ma force, c'est avec vous que je me complais à vivre.*"

THE END.

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